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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide provides the means for elementary students to develop an understanding and appreciation of drama as an integral part of the educational process. It concentrates on the process rather than the product of dramatic art, and provides a sequential progression of ideas, exercises, and strategies which can be adapted by teachers to the needs of their particular students. Following an introduction, a statement of philosophy, goals and objectives, and a scope and sequence chart, the guide--in its first major section--presents four units of study: (1) Sensual Awareness, Concentration and Imagination; (2) Simple Pantomime; (3) Simple Improvisation; and (4) Playmaking. Within each unit of study, various objectives are outlined, a list of resources is included, and activities are suggested which pertain to the specific topic area. The guide's second major section, "Integrating Drama into the General Curriculum," notes that drama has great application as a learning tool in other areas of the curriculum, and offers sample activities which integrate drama into the basic subjects: language arts, social studies, math, and science. Two appendixes present evaluation strategies and bibliographies. (SR)

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Curriculum Guide

K-6

NORTH DAKOTA ARTS CURRICULUM PROJECT

- ☐ CREATIVE WRITING
- ☐ DANCE
- ☑ DRAMA
- ☐ MUSIC
- ☐ VISUAL ARTS

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, SUPERINTENDENT
Bismarck, 1990

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NORTH DAKOTA
DRAMA CURRICULUM GUIDE
K-6

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead, Superintendent
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505

August, 1990

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FOREWORD

The purpose of education is to produce a person that can function in all aspects of society. This includes not only a fundamental grasp of the traditional three R's, but an appreciation for the aesthetic qualities of life. As Herbert Read said:

> "Education is the fostering of growth, but apart from physical maturation, growth is only made apparent in expression . . . audible or visual signs and symbols. Education may therefore be defined as the cultivation of modes of expression. It is teaching children and adults to make sounds, images, movements, tools and utensils . . . . All faculties, of thought, logic, memory, sensibility and intellect are involved in such processes, and no aspect of education is excluded in such processes, and they are all processes which involve art, for art is nothing but the good making of sounds, images, etc. The aim of education is therefore the creation of artists . . . of people efficient in the various modes of expression."

This guide represents the continuing efforts of the Department of Public Instruction to assist school districts in providing a balanced education for all North Dakota students. In addition, this guide provides the means for each student to develop an understanding and appreciation for drama as an integral part of the educational process.

Wayne G. Sanstead

Dr. Wayne G. Sanstead
Superintendent of Public Instruction

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INTRODUCTION

This curriculum is not a handbook for staging a school play. The purpose of drama education is not to train actors or to produce entertainment for an audience but rather: to provide a channel for self-expression, to develop a means for guiding creative imagination, to supply a vehicle for controlled emotional outlet, to help in building good attitudes and appreciations, and to present an opportunity for growth in social cooperation.

Under good adult leadership, dramatic activities offer rich contributions to the development of children, perhaps richer than those of any other activity. Dramatics offers an extensive subject matter--as broad as the world of literature, as wide as the world of the senses, as various as the objects of thought, as intimate as the family, as remote as the heavenly bodies, as deep as touching, as absurd as the human condition . . . and despite all other considerations, it is tremendous fun. It is representation and symbol, laughter and mockery, magic and manipulation of illusion, hoax and hocum.[1]

Consequently, performance is unimportant. Indeed, it may be counter-productive. Stressing the play rather than the player or thinking in terms of the finished product rather than the fun of playing interferes greatly with the child's own sense of expression. Children enjoy life NOW and lose interest in a play that requires many weeks of concentration. Furthermore, scripts get in the way of acting and adult audiences viewing children's productions are usually condescending, driving a nasty wedge between the child and the dramatic image. When adults watch a children's play, they find the children cute, but the children are not trying to be cute! They are trying to be snowflakes or tin soldiers. The audience's improper and unexpected response causes embarrassment and self-consciousness on the part of the actors.

In short, this curriculum will concentrate on the process rather than the product of dramatic art. Even young children engaging in the process of theater can become aware of what they are attempting to do, how they are doing it, what effect it has, and what the worth of their efforts are.

The question must be addressed whether dramatic activities should be programmed into the elementary curriculum as a fine art and a discipline in its own right or integrated with other content areas. Available time usually dictates the answer. When creative dramatics is part of an integrated program, it can add meaning and richness to every other aspect of school work. Strong impressions by students need expression whether they have originated in social studies or language arts. Children are filled with thoughts, ideas, and emotions. They need an opportunity to express them in a creative way.

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[1] Crosscup, Richard: Children and Dramatics, New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

"Dramatics should not be made the 'cart-horse' of other subjects, however--the means by which uninteresting material is made more palatable and facts are memorized painlessly."[2]

The real educational values derived from dramatics come by continuous, cumulative, and sequential experiences in learning the art, either as an art of language or as an art of drama.

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[2]Ward, Winifred: Playmaking With Children: From Kindergarten Through Junior High School, Appleton-Century-Crofts, New York, NY, 1957.

PHILOSOPHY

Dramatics has dynamic potential for use in the education of children.

* It is a democratic activity rather than authoritarian in its practices.
* It educates through experiences which teach children about living.
* It develops individually through the habit of creative thinking.
* It gives children much opportunity for social adjustment, teamwork and the subordination of self to the group.
* It helps children grow in emotional control as well as in mental and physical efficiency.
* It stresses all of the language arts, especially skills in oral communication.
* It is free of that central characteristic of team sports: the determination to defeat an adversary.
* It has the advantage of integrating many activities.
* Most importantly it is an activity that takes place informally for the pleasure of the group itself.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of drama education are:

1. To provide a comprehensive drama education program for all students.
2. To increase creativity and self-esteem.
3. To increase awareness and general appreciation of drama as one of the arts.
4. To broaden teachers' instructional strategies and increase their perceptions of the importance of the arts in child development.
5. To encourage awareness of available community resources.

The objectives of this curriculum are:

1. To enhance the mental processes of perception, imagination, interpretation, and communication used naturally by children in learning.

2. To nurture an appreciation of dramatic art by providing experiences through which students can discover and enjoy theater as audience members.

3. To help students make discoveries about human values and the relationship of drama to real life experiences.

4. To encourage cooperative efforts in the processes of discovering, creating, learning, and problem solving.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

This curriculum is designed with a sequential progression of exercises which is both logical and artistically valid. However, specific exercises are not assigned to precise grade levels for two very good reasons:

First, every teacher knows that the "average" student is difficult to find and an "average" class is even more elusive. An exercise which might be very successful in one third grade class might be totally inappropriate for another third grade class two doors down the hall. Rather than specify a recommended grade level for a particular exercise, the lessons in this curriculum have been roughly arranged in order of increasing difficulty and sophistication. If a teacher is uncertain about precisely where to begin, a little experimentation can quickly determine a starting point.

Second, many of the exercises described in the curriculum are not designed for a single use. They can be repeated many times with a few simple variations. Most often the exercises provide a basic format for an activity which can vary in difficulty and sophistication according to the particular content or problem which is addressed.

Four broad areas of study are defined in the sequential progression of exercises. Although these divisions are designed to develop perceptions and skills in a logical sequence, it is perfectly appropriate to review and repeat exercises from earlier units to expand and enrich fundamental skills and to provide warm-ups and preparation for more complex activities.

In short, this curriculum is not locked to a calendar. Instead it provides a sequential progression of ideas, exercises, and strategies which can be adapted by teachers to the needs of their particular students.

UNITS OF STUDY

I. SENSUAL AWARENESS, CONCENTRATION AND IMAGINATION

II. SIMPLE PANTOMIME

III. SIMPLE IMPROVISATION

IV. PLAYMAKING

UNIT I

SENSUAL AWARENESS, CONCENTRATION AND IMAGINATION

An artist's function is to help others experience life with greater clarity so they can discover new patterns of meaning in the worlds around them. Successful artists develop keen senses which allow them to recognize subtle details and patterns that most people overlook. Expanding and embellishing these subtleties so they can be distinguished by others requires vivid imagination and intense concentration. Although good artists must strive to perfect the technical skills of their discipline, technique is meaningless unless it is used to communicate something of value. An artist's craft is merely a tool for sharing a personal vision and that vision should be more focused and intense than that of the average person. It is therefore logical that the training of any artist should begin with exercises to increase sensual awareness, stretch the imagination and intensify concentration. If art is to have value the artist must be capable of discovering something worth sharing.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT ARE TO HELP STUDENTS:

--to become increasingly observant of immediate and real sensations (awareness and perception),

--to focus on specific sensory processes such as seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and touching,

--to recall sensations actually experienced in the past,

--to imagine sensations,

--to project visible and honest reactions to the present without preconceived responses,

--to focus on specific emotions such as anger, disappointment, elation, etc.,

--to recall and recreate sensations of real experiences in their past,

--to intensify concentration and make increasingly fine sensory discriminations.

Special Note: In the following exercises the teacher can greatly assist students in achieving the objectives listed above through the skillful use of "side coaching." This technique was named and developed by Viola Spolin, a noted authority on creative dramatics for children. Essentially "side coaching" involves asking many specific questions which encourage students to make a more detailed examination of a particular exercise but the tone of voice in which these questions are spoken is critical. A gentle, almost whispered, intonation should be used to avoid intruding on their experiences and breaking their concentration. "Side coaching" questions should not seem to call for a verbal response but rather should guide the students by suggestion in a tone that is nearly hypnotic.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 1** **LIQUID BODIES**

CONCEPT: A state of full body relaxation can be achieved through concentration on a step-by-step process.

OBJECTIVE: To expand sensual awareness and imagination and to develop concentration and full body flexibility.

MATERIALS: None required

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* I'd like to have everyone relax and focus all your concentration on the suggestions I'm going to give you. So we don't have any distractions I want everyone to be very quiet and to put your head down on your desk. (If a carpeted floor or mats are available the students could be instructed to lie down.)

* I want everyone to clear your minds and think pleasant thoughts. First relax your feet. They feel warm and tingly. They feel like they're floating in warm, gently bubbling water. Now the sensation moves to your calves and thighs. Relax and remove all tension from those muscles. Now your hips relax . . . and your stomach. It feels like you are slipping into a warm, relaxing bubble bath. The pleasant warm feeling moves through your shoulders . . . up your neck . . . over your ears, until there is only one small circle on the top of your head which has any tension left. Gradually the circle gets smaller and smaller until there is no tension left in your body and you are completely relaxed. Your body feels like melting butter as it spreads into a warm sunny pool. Enjoy the sensation for a moment. Now gently raise your head.

* Pretend you have fallen asleep under an apple tree. You love apples so you reach up to pick one, but they are beyond your grasp. Slowly you stand up and stretch as high as you can to reach the red juicy apple. Finally you grasp it and pick it from the tree. Taste it. It's sweet and delicious.

* Now pretend you are a wax candle standing by a window. The summer sun is rising outside. As it gets warmer you slowly begin to melt. Melt very slowly as the sun warms you from the top down. Don't tip over all at once. Ooze down and spread out on the floor.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Besides focusing concentration and stretching imagination this exercise is designed to increase full body flexibility and control. Encourage students to make slow, liquid movements with smoothness and control. This exercise should be done in silence by the students as the teacher gently guides them through the experience with side coaching. As an option, soft relaxing music might be played in the background. This is a very calming; peaceful activity.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 2** **HOLDING THE IMAGE**

CONCEPT: Focused concentration on an imaginary activity can increase the strength of the illusion it creates.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability to focus concentration on a specific imaginary task.

MATERIALS: A ring or other small object which is hidden somewhere in the room.

---

* I've lost a ring somewhere in this room and I'd like all of you to help me find it.

* Thank you for helping me find my ring. You were all concentrating very hard on your job and we could feel that energy as we searched. Now I'd like you to use that same concentration to do an imaginary task.

* Let's pretend that there is a leaky pipe somewhere in the room. If you are very still and listen carefully you can just barely hear it going drip, drip, drip. Let's try to find the imaginary leaky pipe using the same concentration that we had when we found the real ring.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise can be done many times using a variety of imaginary activities. The group could pretend to watch a plane landing, look at an imaginary TV program, smell the imaginary aromas of food cooking in the lunchroom kitchen, etc. The objective is to get the students to hold the image and focus their concentration for as long as possible. The absence of noise is often a measure of the group's success in focusing their attention. Giggling or other self-conscious behavior is an indication that concentration has been broken.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 3** **WHO BEGAN THE MOTION**

CONCEPT: Focusing on a specific task can increase perception and sensual sensitivity.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage group cooperation and to develop a keen eye for detail.

MATERIALS: None required

---

* Today we are going to see how good you are at spotting small details. For this game we need one volunteer to be the "detective." That person has to leave the room for a few minutes while I explain the secret to the rest of the class.

* Now that our volunteer is out of the room I would like to select a "leader." When we start playing the game everyone will stand in a circle with the "detective" in the center. The "leader" will start a motion like tapping a foot or slowly raising an arm and everyone else should copy exactly what the "leader" does.

* The "detective's" job is to figure out who the "leader" is so everyone has to react quickly and exactly to the "leader" so it isn't obvious who was first to begin the motion. You must watch the "leader" without looking directly. We don't want to make the "detective's" job too easy.

* Once the "detective" correctly identifies the "leader" we'll pick a new "leader" and "detective" and play the game again.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This game encourages keen observation and quick response for all the group members since everyone must respond quickly and inconspicuously to the leader to keep his/her identity secret from the "detective."

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 4** **MIRRORS**

CONCEPT: Concentrating attention on and copying actions can increase sensual awareness and develop muscle flexibility and control.

OBJECTIVE: To develop keen observation and skills and to encourage responsive physical expression.

MATERIALS: None required

---

* Today we are going to work with imaginary mirrors. I would like each of you to pick a partner.

* As a warm-up to this exercise I would like you to face your partner and observe everything about them. Now turn around and make three small changes in your own physical appearance. (Unbutton a button, readjust your hair, move some small article from one pocket to another, etc.) Now turn around and see if you can spot your partner's three changes.

* Now that we are concentrating on fine details I'd like you and your partner to face each other and pretend there is an imaginary mirror between you. We'll play this game twice. The first time one of you will be the leader and the other person will be the leader's mirror image. Then we'll reverse roles the second time we play the game.

* In order for this exercise to work well the leader must move very slowly and everyone must be very quiet. The leader can move arms and legs, change posture and facial expression, show different moods and feelings, etc. Just remember to move very slowly and don't make a sound.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* In addition to promoting keen observation this game has the surprising ability to build understanding between the participants. The mirror image tends to "become" the other person and starts to experience the world from that person's perspective. (It is interesting to note that old married couples often tend to physically resemble each other because they have unconsciously "mirrored" each other's actions for many years.)

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 5** **CATCH**

CONCEPT: Sense memories can be recalled and recreated in the imagination.

OBJECTIVE: To develop sense memory and strengthen the imagination.

MATERIALS: None required but a mailing tube or rolled up piece of paper might be used as indicated in the instructions.

---

* Today we are going to play catch with an imaginary ball. Pretend that the ball is invisible but it has the same weight and size as a real one so treat it just as if it were real. The ball we are using is a magic ball that can change instantly from one kind of ball to another. I have a special telescope (a mailing tube or rolled up piece of paper) that helps me see the ball so I'll tell you what kind of ball it is before you catch it.

* (The teacher can divide the students into pairs or arrange them in a large circle around which the "ball" can be tossed. The "telescope," can help the students keep track of the ball by pointing to it as it flies through the air. Once a rhythm of tossing is established the "ball" can be changed in mid-flight from a tennis ball, to a ping pong ball, to a basketball, to a football or beach ball, etc. The game can be played until the students tire of it. Afterwards a discussion of how different balls feel and how they are used might be helpful. The students might be asked to demonstrate the different ways they handle various types of balls.)

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Variations on this game include pantomime versions of most any sport or activities such as flying kites, jumping rope, playing jacks or marbles, etc. Choose activities which the students are likely to be familiar with. Encourage them to be more aware of sensations as they do every day activities so they can recall them in the future.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

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UNIT I **ACTIVITY 6** **WALKING THROUGH**

CONCEPT: Sense memories can be recalled and recreated in the imagination.

OBJECTIVE: To develop sense memory and stretch the imagination.

MATERIALS: No special materials are required. However, a small drum to establish a beat in the first part of the exercise might be helpful.

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* Today we are going to go on a walk through our imaginations. In our minds we can travel to many different places without ever leaving this room. Before we start on our journey, though, I would like to be sure the whole group stays together so I'm going to beat on this drum (clap my hands) and I want all of you to walk in time with the beats you hear. (The teacher establishes a beat. Once the students begin to walk in time with the beat the teacher can vary the tempo and rhythm until the class gets into the spirit of working as a group.)

* Now that we're all walking together, pretend there is green grass under your feet rather than the floor of this room. How does the grass feel? Your feet are tired. Doesn't it feel good to put them down in the cool, soft grass?

* Now pretend that we've come to a river. We are walking across the sandy bank. Feel the sand on the bottom of your feet. It's very hot. You have to step fast and light in order to avoid burning your feet.

* Now we are right by the water's edge and there are some rough pebbles to step over. They are sharp and hard and you have to be careful so you don't cut your feet.

* Now we have stepped into the water. The cool water is rushing around your legs and bubbling between your toes. The current is fairly strong so you have to lean against it to avoid being pushed over. Hold on to your neighbor so no one gets swept away.

* There's a little pile of rocks in the middle of the stream. We're going to climb up on them and rest for a while. Be careful. The rocks are covered with slippery moss.

* Time to move on. Let's wade through the water to the other side of the stream. Now we're moving across the sand to the edge of the forest. It's cool and shady in the forest but the bushes are very thick and scratchy and we have to push them out of the way as we walk. There's a clearing ahead. Be very quiet. Sometimes a family of deer can be found eating the grass in the sunny meadow. Carefully look through the bushes and see if you can spot them. It's a beautiful day. Let's all help spread out our blanket and have a picnic before we start for home.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Many variations on this exercise are possible. The group could walk through a snow storm with high winds, deep drifts, and slippery ice. An imaginary tour of a farm yard, shopping center, swimming pool, etc. are all possible. Try to choose environments familiar to the students and encourage their sense recall with descriptions of the surroundings they are passing through.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 7** **CHANGING SPACE WALKTHROUGH**

CONCEPT: Sense memories can be recalled and expanded through imagination to create a new sensual experience.

OBJECTIVE: To recall real sensations and expand them through imagination.

MATERIALS: None required

---

* Today we are going to go walking through our imaginations. I'm going to suggest different types of spaces and substances that you are walking through. I'd like you to imagine what it would be like to walk through these things. Then let your body react as it would if you were really walking through the things I suggest.

* So we can all work together as a team I'd like you to form a large circle. To get you started I'm going to clap my hands (or tap on the desk) and I'd like you to start walking around the circle in time with my clapping.

* Now that we're all walking together I'd like you to pretend that you are walking on the following surfaces: hot sand, mud, a trampoline, marshmallows, a water bed, sharp spikes, ankle deep water (knee- or waist-high). How does the surface feel against your feet? How do your legs respond?

* Now let's pretend you're walking against a strong wind. How does the wind feel against your face? How do your muscles feel as you lean into the wind? Now pretend you are walking through a snow blizzard. How does your body react? Now pretend it's a hot muggy day and a heavy rain is falling. Now pretend it is dark. You can't see where you are going. Suddenly you walk into a brick wall. Feel the wall with your hands and move along it to see if you can find a way through or around it.

* Now let's really stretch our imagination. Pretend you are walking through: outer space, neck deep mud, mounds of cotton candy, a huge tank filled with soda pop, clouds of butterflies, etc.

* Finally I'd like you to use your imagination to <u>become</u> something else and move through a space. Try to imagine what it would feel like to <u>be</u> the thing I suggest. Then move and react as you think <u>it</u> would. For this part of the exercise you don't have to stay in the circle.

* Pretend you are wind moving through a garden. How do you move? What are some of the things you brush against? How do they feel? Now pretend you are: water trickling down a riverbed, blocks of ice melting on hot sand, surf crashing against rocks, great green frogs leaping after flies, explorers cutting their way through a thick jungle, etc.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Many variations on this exercise are possible. The teacher's ingenuity can be stretched inventing interesting surfaces or substances to move through. Students should be encouraged to really believe in what they are doing and become sensitive to the sensations they might experience. Specific "side coaching" can be very beneficial in this exercise.

* Although the rhythmic clapping or tapping is intended primarily to get the students started in an orderly fashion, the tempo or rhythm of the clapping could be varied to help suggest the various imaginary environments in the exercise.

* Discussion should follow the exercise. Students can be asked how they felt, how their bodies reacted, which muscles they used, what tensions and sensations they experienced.

* Some other possibilities for environments to walk through include the following: through a dark, dangerous alley, in the burning desert, looking for water, down a road of sticky asphalt and tar, from the cold out-of-doors into a warm room, across a street of broken glass, in a bowl of feathers, through a huge bowl of whipped cream, across a log over a ravine full of crocodiles, through a bowl of chewed up bubble gum.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 8** **RHYTHMIC RESPONSES**

CONCEPT: Musical rhythms can unify group activity. They can also suggest moods and specific actions since many activities naturally produce rhythmic patterns.

OBJECTIVE: To develop rhythmic sensitivity and the ability to express rhythmic patterns physically. To develop control of body movement and promote cooperative group responses.

MATERIALS: A small drum or other rhythm instrument which can be used to produce rhythmic patterns. A phonograph or tape player and a collection of recorded musical selections representing a variety of moods and rhythmic patterns.

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* First I'd like to see how well you can follow directions. I'm going to beat on this drum (clap my hands) to establish a regular rhythm. I want you to move in time with the beat of the drum as you follow my directions. Each action will be done on eight counts. On the first count I'll tell you what to do. On the remaining seven counts do the action in time with the beat of the drum.

* (Teacher establishes tempo on the drum.) 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-WALK FORWARD-2-3-4-5-6-7-WALK BACKWARD-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-SIDE STEP LEFT, ETC. (Other commands such as STRETCH UP, BEND OVER, ZIGZAG LEFT, HOP FORWARD, etc. can be added.)

* Now that you have the idea of moving to the beat I am going to change the rhythm. Try to do the actions I suggest in time with the beating of the drum. (The teacher can use a variety of rhythmic patterns to challenge the students' rhythmic sensitivity.)

* We're going to try the exercise again but this time rather than use the drum or hand claps I'm going to play some music. Try to pick up the beat of the music and move to it just as you did to the drum beat.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This basic exercise can serve as an introduction to dance and movement training. It challenges the students to respond quickly to directions while the rhythmic beat tends to unify the group. Increasingly sophisticated rhythm patterns can be used. (An electronic drum machine or the rhythm feature found on many of the new portable electronic keyboards might be a valuable aid for this exercise but simple hand claps are sufficient.)

* Recorded music can effectively add the element of mood. Ballet music as well as the background music from many popular film scores are frequently good choices. Students might be asked to respond with spontaneous movements to the recorded music. Afterwards the group can discuss what kinds of moods and activities the music suggests to them.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 9** **GROUP MACHINES**

CONCEPT: Individual creativity in movement and sound can be unified by a rhythmic pulse.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage the creation of original movement and sound patterns and to develop these patterns in cooperation with others.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Today we are all going to work together and create an imaginary machine. I'd like each one of you to pretend that you are a part in the machine. I want you to make up a movement that your part would do over and over again. Then I'd like you to make up a sound that your part would make as it moves.

* I'm going to start clapping my hands and as I call your names I'd like you to go into the center of the room and find where your part would fit into the machine we are building. Once you have fitted yourself into the machine, start making your movement and sound in time with the beat of my clapping.

* Once everyone has fitted themselves into our machine I'm going to change the speed of my clapping. Stay with the beat and work together.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* As a variation on this exercise a particular type of machine could be developed. Observing a real machine such as a movie projector before attempting the exercise would give students an opportunity to pick out specific movements and sounds they could use.

CONCEPT: Isolating and focusing attention on a particular sense can help to increase its sensitivity.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability to distinguish increasingly fine visual details and to recognize increasingly subtle visual patterns.

MATERIALS: Large photographs or magazine pictures showing familiar scenes or objects and cardboard or construction paper for masking selected areas of the pictures.

* I'd like to see how good you are at recognizing details in pictures and figuring out what the rest of the picture might show.

* I've used a piece of cardboard to cover up all but a small part of this picture. I want you to look carefully at the part you can see. What details do you notice? What shape and texture do they suggest? Where might this part of the photo fit in with the rest of the picture? What do you think the rest of the picture shows? Did you learn anything new about this type of object or scene that you never noticed before?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Using the cardboard masks, the teacher can draw attention to visual details that might otherwise go unnoticed. The mask should be arranged in such a way that it reveals only textures or specific details rather than the general outline of the object. This exercise could be adapted to many grade levels depending on the particular photos which are chosen and the areas which are visible. Older students should be expected to distinguish increasingly subtle details and to use these clues in identifying more unusual objects and scenes.

* Large pictures clipped from magazines are inexpensive and readily available materials for this exercise. As a variation on the exercise these pictures could be cut into pieces. Sections of the picture could be given to individual students or small groups who could then work collectively in identifying the complete picture. To finish the exercise the pieces could be reassembled to form the original photograph.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 11 SENSE FOCUS (Hearing)**

CONCEPT: Isolating and focusing attention on a particular sense can help to increase its sensitivity.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability to hear and distinguish subtle details in rhythm and sound quality.

MATERIALS: Objects or devices which can produce sounds such as alarm clocks, sheets of cellophane, balloons, musical instruments, etc. (If live sounds are being used blindfolds might also be helpful.) Commercial sound effects records or home made tape recordings of sounds might also be used.

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* I would like to see how good you are at hearing different qualities of sound. To help focus all your attention on hearing I would like everyone to close their eyes (put on blindfolds) and be very still. I am going to make or play recordings of certain sounds for you. I'd like you to listen carefully and then try to identify what is making the sound.

* What is special about this sound? What words would you use to describe the quality of the sound? What other sounds is it similar to? What small details make this sound different from those others? Is there a particular rhythm to this sound which makes it special? What do you think is making this sound?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Live sounds, commercially recorded sound effects, or home made tape recordings could be used. Beyond identifying the source of the sound, the exercise serves to focus attention on the quality of the sound itself and encourages the students to make distinctions between it and similar sounds.

* Sounds could be randomly selected or they could be grouped into categories such as animal sounds, instruments of the orchestra, etc.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 12 SENSE FOCUS (Touch)**

CONCEPT: Isolating and focusing attention on a particular sense can help to increase its sensitivity.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability to distinguish subtle details in texture, temperature, weight and shape by using the sense of touch.

MATERIALS: A variety of small familiar objects placed in paper bags.

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* I'd like to see how good you are at recognizing objects by your sense of touch. We are so used to using our eyes to see what an object looks like that we often fail to notice the way it feels.

* To help you focus your attention on the sense of touch I've placed some objects in these paper bags. I'd like you to reach into each bag and carefully feel what is inside. What shape does the object seem to have? Does it feel warm or cold? How heavy does it feel? What words would you use to describe the texture of the object? Is it rough, smooth, sticky, spongy, etc.? What do you think the object in the bag is?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* In identifying the objects in the bags the students focus their attention on the different qualities which can be discovered through touch. One bag could be passed around the room and the touch sensations could be discussed with the whole group or many bags could be used at one time. The bags could be labeled with a number and the students could write on a sheet of paper what they think is in each numbered bag.

* As a variation on this exercise, students could be blindfolded and asked to examine larger articles or spaces through touching.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 13 SENSE FOCUS (Taste and Smell)**

CONCEPT: Isolating and focusing attention on a particular sense can help to increase its sensitivity.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability to distinguish increasingly fine nuances of taste and smell.

MATERIALS: Samples of material with distinctive aromas as well as samples of foods and materials which can be tasted.

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* I'd like to see how good you are at recognizing things by the way they taste and smell. So we can focus on taste and smell more clearly I'd like all of you to close your eyes (put on blindfolds). Then I'm going to let you smell some things. See if you can identify these items by the way they smell. Some of the things I'm going to bring to you are things you can eat. I'd like you to taste those things and see if you can identify them.

* What words would you use to describe the way each thing tastes and smells? Can you name anything that has a similar taste or smell? What do you think this thing is?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Simple materials like pieces of fruit or vegetable, popcorn, sugar, salt, etc. can be used in this exercise. Inedible things to smell might include pieces of leather, wet wool, laundry detergent, wood ashes, etc.

* An interesting variation on this exercise might involve comparing various artificial scents and flavorings with the actual materials.

* Taste and smell are combined in this exercise because they are closely related. The "flavor" of many food items is actually based as much on smell as it is on taste. An interesting experiment can be done with pieces of apple and onion. If the students plug their noses the items are difficult to distinguish by taste alone.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 14 SENSE IMAGES**

CONCEPT: Concentrating on specific imaginary sense images can strengthen overall concentration and increase sensual awareness.

OBJECTIVE: To focus on specific sensory processes such as seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching.

MATERIALS: None required

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* I would like you to become more aware of what you see, hear, touch, taste, and smell every day so we are going to do some imaginary exercises in which we will focus on one sense at a time. As you look, listen, touch, taste, or smell try to treat the imaginary situation as if it were real. Concentrate all your attention on your task and imagine each sensation as vividly as possible.

* Pretend that you have left your jacket in a very large room like the gymnasium. Really look for it until you finally find it. Imagine all the things you would really see in this situation.

* Now try to find your jacket in a dark closet. Focus on what you can see as well as what you can't. It's dark in the closet so you have to look very carefully.

* Now pretend your jacket is lost in your own room at home. Pretend you are looking for it there and picture in your mind all the things you would see in your own room.

* Now suppose your jacket has been thrown into a pile with many others in the locker room. Look at each jacket and see it in your imagination as you sort through them trying to find your own.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise can be done with the focus given to each of the senses. "Side coaching" from the teacher using specific questions about sensual details can be very helpful. Practice in actual hearing and observation is a good exercise and may be introduced either before the imaginary exercise or at any point that the teacher thinks it would be valuable. For example the teacher might ask the students to:

  1. Close your eyes for one minute and listen to all the sounds you can hear. No talking.

  2. Go to one corner of the room and describe all the things that you see.

3. Touch one object and describe it as completely as possible.

* EXERCISES FOR THE SENSE OF HEARING:

1. Hearing an explosion.

2. Listening to a small sound and trying to decide what it is.

3. Listening to a school band playing as it marches down the street in a parade.

4. Listening to a specific popular song on the radio.

* EXERCISES FOR THE SENSE OF SMELL:

1. Coming home from school and smelling cookies baking in the kitchen.

2. Smelling the exhaust fumes of the bus as you wait in the schoolyard.

3. Smelling different perfumes or shaving lotions at a department store.

4. Smelling something unpleasant and trying to decide what it is.

* EXERCISES FOR THE SENSE OF TASTE:

1. Eating a piece of delicious chocolate candy.

2. Trying a foreign food you have never tasted before, and deciding you like it.

3. Biting into a sour apple.

* EXERCISES FOR THE SENSE OF TOUCH:

1. Touching a piece of velvet.

2. Touching a hot stove.

3. Touching or holding an ice cube.

4. Touching or holding some sharp nails.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 15 TABLE OF IMAGINATION**

CONCEPT: Physical reactions can create the illusion of real objects in the imagination of an audience.

OBJECTIVE: To convey the presence of simple, imagined objects with clarity and a sense of size and space relationship.

MATERIALS: A large empty table

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* The table in the center of the room is covered with imaginary objects. I would like each one of you to go to the table and pick up the object which interests you the most. Even though the object is invisible to everyone but you, it still has the same size and weight as a real one.

* Examine your object carefully. Later I will be asking you to describe your object and show it to the rest of the class.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Although this is essentially an individual exercise, several students can go to the table at one time so the group's attention need not be focused on a single student. If students are nervous or self-conscious they can show the objects to other students near them rather than to the entire class. The teacher can help students create more detailed mental images by asking specific questions about the objects they have created and picked from the table.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 16 MOOD CHANGES**

CONCEPT: Different moods and feelings produce different physical reactions in people.

OBJECTIVE: To feel various real and immediate emotions and to communicate those emotions visibly and convincingly.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Often we can tell the way people are feeling by the way they act. Today I'd like to have you imagine yourself in some situations which I will suggest. Pretend that you are really living through the situation and show us with your face and body the feelings you might be having if the situations were real. This is a pantomime exercise so try not to use any words or make any sounds with your voice. Concentrate on showing your emotions with your body.

* Let's pretend that you are going on a field trip that you have looked forward to for a long time. You get in the bus, but the bus will not start. After a few minutes, the driver lets you know that the bus won't go and your trip must be postponed. You are disappointed and you get out. Suddenly the engine starts. You turn around and see the driver motioning for you to get back in. You are very happy because you can go on the trip after all.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise can be done with the entire group participating or with portions of the group performing as others observe. Discussions of the different ways we show emotions physically would be a good follow-up to this exercise. Try to isolate the different movements and reactions which indicate different emotional states. The teacher can describe many different situations which would create changing emotional reactions. Some suggestions are as follows:

* You are a group of friends taking a hike in the woods. It's a beautiful day and you see many pretty wild flowers. You stop to have lunch, but when you are ready to move on, you discover that you have wandered from the path and are lost. Where are you? Should you go on, or turn back? Is there any landmark you can recognize? Suddenly you hear noises in the bushes. Is it a bear or some wild animal? Out of the bushes steps a park ranger who tells you that the path is just a few steps away. Everyone is greatly relieved.

* You are with a group of people in an elevator in a large building. Suddenly the elevator stops between floors. You try pushing the buttons but nothing happens. Suddenly the elevator lurches and drops a few inches. Then it stops again. People are getting nervous but someone suggests using the emergency phone. The person talking on the phone tells everyone that workers are trying to fix the trouble but it could be some time before the elevator is moving again. Suddenly the elevator starts moving and stops at your floor. The door opens and you get out, greatly relieved.

* You are a group of students who come into your classroom one morning and find a monkey scampering around. At first you are startled but then you are amused by his antics. Finally, a man who has lost the monkey comes in and catches him. When the monkey is taken away you are sorry to see him go.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 17 ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS**

CONCEPT: Words represent the qualities of real experiences. It is possible to convey these same qualities through action.

OBJECTIVE: To build vocabulary by relating words directly to the physical qualities they represent.

MATERIALS: Cards with a selected adjective or adverb written on each one. (For younger students use simple words like "hot," "cold," "bumpy," "smooth." For older students more difficult words such as "dangerous," "absent-minded," "disgusted," etc. might be used.)

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* Some words give a name to things or actions but other words describe how something looks or feels or how it moves. These words are called adjectives (or adverbs).

* I have an adjective (or adverb) written on each one of these cards. I'd like each one of you to draw a card from the deck and act out the quality it describes. Then we'll talk about the word and see if there are other ways we might act out the same quality.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* The applications of this particular exercise to language arts studies, particularly parts of speech, are obvious. The exercise is particularly valuable as a vocabulary builder because it relates abstract words directly to the qualities they represent rather than merely define them in terms of other words. It might be helpful for the teacher to demonstrate the process a few times before calling on students. If having individual students perform puts them under too much pressure the teacher might just write the word on the blackboard and ask the entire class to act it out. Particularly good demonstrations might be pointed out and redone for the class. Further discussion and demonstration could lead to a detailed exploration of a word's meaning. In the case of adverbs students could be asked to perform the same simple action (like walking) in a manner specified by their adverb ("timidly," etc.).

Adapted from: Children and Dramatics, by Richard Crosscup, New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 18 GREETING BY NUMBER**

CONCEPT: Tone of voice and gesture can profoundly affect the meaning of spoken words.

OBJECTIVE: To help students become more sensitive to the effects of vocal tone and gesture and to develop their abilities for vocal and physical expression.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Often the <u>way</u> a word is said is more important than the word itself. To demonstrate this idea I'd like you to greet each other in many different ways. In order to remove any meaning the words might have, we will simply use numbers to greet each other. That way <u>all</u> the meaning will come from your tone of voice and gestures.

* I am going to divide the class into two groups. I'd like one person from each group to come to the center of the room and greet each other. The person from group "A" should say 1-2-3-4-5 and the person from group "B" should respond 6-7-8-9-10. Remember it's not <u>what</u> you say but <u>how</u> you say it!

* I'd like the first two people to greet each other as two old friends who have not seen each other for a long time and are happy to meet again. The next group should greet each other as two friends who have recently had an argument and are being cool to each other, etc.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* The teacher can invent many circumstances for the greeting exercise. Here are some suggestions:

* Like snobs, like people in a big hurry but friendly, like old people, like young children, sadly, crying, in a bored manner, extremely polite, while giggling, with heavy foreign accents, like robots, like rude people in a big hurry.

Adapted from: <u>Theatre Games for Young Performers</u>, by Maria C. Novelly, Colorado Springs, CO, Meriwether Publishing Ltd., © 1985.

UNIT I ACTIVITY 19 LAUNDRY IN THE WIND

CONCEPT: A poem can provide the basis for an imaginative exploration of an experience.

OBJECTIVE: To help students develop their own creative imagination in expanding on an idea provided by a simple poem.

MATERIALS: None required

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* I'd like to read a little poem to you. Listen carefully.

  Hand in hand they dance in a row,
  Hither and thither, to and fro,
  Flip, flap, flop, and away they go,
  Fluttering creatures, as white as snow.

* What do you think the poem is talking about? What are the "fluttering creatures as white as snow?" (After some guessing the students will hopefully discover that the poem is talking about laundry on a clothesline.)

* Let's all join hands and pretend to be clothes on a line. Try to feel limp and floppy and act like creatures fluttering in the wind.

* Now that we all have the feeling of being clothes on a line I'd like each one of you to imagine what article of clothing you might be.

* Take a minute to think about it and then share with the rest of us what you are. Who do you belong to? Do you move any differently from the other wash? How do you feel about being what you are?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Many poems can provide a springboard for an imaginative exploration of an idea or experience. The basic technique is to have the students project themselves into the situation by "becoming" a part of it. The ability to become imaginatively involved is essential to the full appreciation of literature since an author provides only words which must trigger the reader's imagination.

Adapted from: Playmaking With Children: From Kindergarten Through Junior High School, 2d ed., by Winifred Ward, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, NY, 1957.

UNIT I ACTIVITY 20 BAG OF STORIES

CONCEPT: Real objects can stimulate imagination.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage a flexible and vivid imagination as well as to develop keen skills in observation.

MATERIALS: Small paper or cloth bags filled with several interesting or unusual objects.

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* Today we're going to break the class up into a number of small groups. Each group is going to get a bag with some things in it. I want you to work together in your group and make up a little story about the things you find in the bag.

* Take the objects out of the bag and look at them carefully. They may have clues which will help you make up your story.

* Who do you think owned these things? What were they used for? How do you think the last owner felt about them? Was there a special reason they kept this object? Is there any connection between the different objects in the bag? Why might someone give these objects to you? What might be your relationship with the last owner?

* This is a made up story. There are no right or wrong answers so don't be afraid to use your imagination. When everyone is ready each group will tell their story and show us the objects in their bag.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise could be easily adapted to the study of other subjects by filling the bags with objects which relate to that study.

Adapted from: Children and Dramatics, by Richard Crosscup, New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 21** **FOUR CONCENTRATION GAMES**

CONCEPT: Concentration can be focused to strengthen sensitivity and performance.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage students to concentrate their attention on a specific task.

MATERIALS: None required for the first three games. A tray filled with miscellaneous small objects for the last game.

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* For our first game I would like everyone to pick a partner. The rules of this game are very simple. I want you to try to reach around with your hand and touch your partner in the middle of the back. No hitting! I just want you to touch the back gently. You may not touch your partner any place other than the middle of the back or you will lose the game. The first person to touch your partner without being touched yourself wins.

* For our next game I want everyone to sit in a circle. I'll start the game by saying a word. The person to my right must repeat my word and add another word. The next person must say the first two words and add a new one. The words don't have to make any sense with each other so you can pick most any word you want. We'll keep going around the circle adding a new word with each person until someone can't remember all the words. When we play the game again the person who missed can give the first word. Pay careful attention and try to remember as many of the words as you can.

* For the next game we'll stay in our circle. First we'll count off around the circle so everyone has a number. I'll be number one and the first person to my right will be number two. The next person will be number three, etc. Everyone remember your own number and listen for it in the game we are going to play. I'll set up a steady rhythm and I'd like everyone to do the following things in the following order in time with the beat. Slap your thigh, clap your hands, snap the fingers on your right hand and then snap the fingers on your left hand. We'll keep doing those same four things over and over again while we play the game. Let's go through the routine a few times to get the feel of it. Now I'll start the game by saying my own number when we snap right and someone else's number when we snap left. The next time we snap right that person must say his/her own number and someone else's number when we snap left. We'll keep going until someone makes a mistake. Everyone must pay careful attention and listen carefully so we don't get mixed up.

* For our last game I have a tray with many small objects on it. I'm going to show you the tray for just a few seconds and I want you to try to remember as many things from the tray as you can. Afterwards each of you will make a list of all the things you can remember. We'll check the lists to see who correctly remembered the largest number of items.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* There are many variations on concentration games. These exercises are often good warm-ups for other activities.

UNIT I **ACTIVITY 22 IMAGINATIVE INTERACTION**

CONCEPT: An improvisational exploration of the interaction between elemental forces can be based on knowledge of the properties of these forces.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability for using creative imagination to project possible outcomes based on known facts and situations.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Today we are going to do some experiments to see what might happen if two substances or forces were to interact with each other. I'm going to ask for two volunteers and I would like each of you to play the part of a force or substance. Before we do the improvisation we'll talk about what qualities we can expect from each force or substance. Then I would like our volunteers to use these qualities in their improvisation.

* For our first experiment we are going to see what happens when fire and wind are placed together. What are some of the qualities of fire? Where does it come from? What does it need to grow? How does it move? What is wind like? How does it move? What does it need to grow? Is there any relationship between fire and wind?

* Now I'd like one student to play the part of the fire and another student to play the part of the wind. Be sure that each of you use the qualities we discovered in our discussion as you do your improvisation. What would happen if these two items were placed together?

* What happened in the improvisation? Do you think this is what would really happen? Did the players use all the qualities we discussed? Are there any other possible conclusions? Let's try it again with two more players.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This improvisation is rather demanding but it is a good example of how artistic creativity can be applied to the exploration and solution of real problems. Suggestions for other interactors might include the following: running water and solid rock, tree branches and icy rain, snow drifts and hot sun, ice freezing in the cracks of a rock, acid poured on a metal surface, etc.

UNIT I

RESOURCES

FILMS which explore sensations and feelings:

Dream of Wild Horses, 9 minutes, Contemporary Films

Leaf, 7 minutes, Holt, Rinehart and Winston

My Own Yard to Play In, 7 minutes, McGraw-Hill Films

The Red Balloon, 34 minutes, Brandon Films

The Thieving Magpie, 10 minutes, Universal Education and Visual Arts

FILMS to suggest movement:

Canon, 10 minutes, International Film Bureau

Glass, 10 minutes, Contemporary Films

Time of the Horn, 7 minutes, Journal Films

Fable of the Peacock, 15 minutes, Brandon Films

BOOKS:

Cottrell, June: Teaching With Creative Dramatics, Lincolnwood, IL, National Textbook Co., 1984.

Crosscup, Richard: Children and Dramatics, New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

Goodridge, Janet: Creative Drama and Improvised Movement for Children, Boston, MA, Plays, Inc., 1971.

Heinig, Ruth Beall: Creative Drama for the Classroom Teacher, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Novelly, Maria C.: Theatre Games for Young Performers, Colorado Springs, CO, Meriwether Publishing Ltd., 1985.

McCaslin, Nellie: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

Spolin, Viola: Theater Games for Rehearsal, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 1985.

MATERIALS to develop sensual awareness and imagination:

Many interesting small objects or artifacts can be the basis for an exercise in sensual awareness and can serve as a stimulus for creative imagination. Objects relating to units of study in other subjects such as history and social science can combine the study of that subject with artistic exploration. Articles of clothing, especially hats and accessories, are also powerful stimuli for sensitivity and imagination exercises.

MATERIALS to stimulate creative movement:

Scarves, hoops, strings, ropes, elastic, tube jerseys, gunny sacks, balloons, feathers, plastic tubes

UNIT II

SIMPLE PANTOMIME

Pantomime is the art of conveying ideas without using words. Expression is made by movement of the body. Human beings tend to be visual and action-oriented. Seeing is believing, and most people give more credibility to physical actions than to spoken words. It is significant to note that the name applied to the theatre artist is "actor" rather than speaker. In developing a craft to convey the discoveries made through increased sensual awareness it is logical to concentrate next on the physical channels of expression.

Another purpose of pantomime is to keep the sense memory alive and creatively active. In the words of creative dramatics expert Richard Crosscup: "The purpose of pantomime is to put us in touch with our bodies, to make us know through the creative act of memory how it feels to lean against the wind, how we raise our knees in deep snow, how we pull our clothes from our sticky flesh in muggy weather, how it feels in the muscles of arms and fingers to turn a doorknob or brush our teeth, how it feels to lift a weight, to thread a needle, to be a piston and a piston rod, to be a billiard ball, to fly, to subside and rekindle as a flame, to sway in ocean currents like the fronds of a sponge. The purpose of pantomime is to unfold within the imagination the kinaesthetic experiences which the soul has stored up."

Students should not only do pantomime, they should see good pantomime done such as that of Marcel Marceau, Charlie Chaplin, Red Skelton, and Danny Kaye, and television performances of "Sesame Street" on PBS, and, when possible, some Chinese theater.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT ARE TO DEVELOP THE STUDENTS' ABILITY:

--to convey the presence of simple, imagined objects with clarity and a sense of size and space relationship,

--to convey the meaning of an action without words,

--to feel various real and immediate emotions and be able to communicate those emotions visibly and convincingly,

--to externalize and communicate a sense of character,

--to perform a complex pantomime with clarity and precision, using objects, actions, and characterization,

--to work cooperatively in groups to create a pantomime.

Special Note: The "side coaching" technique described in the introduction to the previous unit continues to be of great value in the study of pantomime. Exercises in sense awareness can lead logically into pantomime work as students display through their physical reactions the sensations they are feeling in their own bodies. The teacher should use "side coaching" to encourage students to make and display increasingly fine sensory discriminations.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 1 INTRODUCTION TO PANTOMIME

CONCEPT: Specific physical reactions to the properties of imaginary objects can create a strong illusion of that object for an audience.

OBJECTIVE: To develop increased sensual awareness and to encourage students to use their discoveries about sensual reactions to communicate specific information about objects and situations.

MATERIALS: A collection of materials to examine in preparing for a pantomime. (Feathers, balloons, sponges, pieces of string, rubber bands, pencils, or most any small object with definite physical properties can be useful.)

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* People react to certain objects in very definite ways. If we do these same reactions with an imaginary object other people can often tell which object we are pretending to use. This process is called pantomime. See if you can figure out what I am pretending to use. (The teacher demonstrates a simple pantomime using a balloon, feather, etc.)

* To make a pantomime more clear we need to treat the imaginary object in exactly the same way we would a real one. Before you try doing some pantomimes of objects I'd like to have you examine some real objects so you can pantomime the imaginary ones more clearly. (Ideally the teacher gives each student a sample of the object to be pantomimed. However, a smaller number of objects could be passed around the room.)

* Pick up the object and handle it carefully? Touch it all over with your fingers so you can feel its shape. How much does it weigh? How does the surface of the object feel? Is it smooth, rough, sticky, etc.? Does the object have any smell to it? How do you react to the smell? Does it make any sound? How do you react to the sound? What would you <u>do</u> with this object? Do you have any emotional feelings about the object?

* Now put the object down. <u>Pretend</u> to pick it up again. Try to treat the imaginary object <u>exactly</u> as you did the real one. Touch it all over with your fingers. Try to show the shape of the imaginary object by the way you move your fingers over its surface. Try to keep the size of the imaginary object the same as the real one. How heavy is the imaginary object? Try to treat it as if it has the same weight as the real one. Pretend to smell, taste, or listen to the imaginary object. Do it exactly as you did with the real one. Now use the imaginary object for some purpose just the same way as you did with the real one.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Films or videotapes of professional pantomime artists can be used to develop student appreciation of pantomime skills before attempting this exercise.

* Good pantomime requires attention to detail and precise muscle control to duplicate the physical reactions of a real experience. Encourage students to keep the sizes, shapes, weights and textures of their imaginary objects accurate and consistent. Point out that fingers cannot be poked through a solid surface and imaginary objects held in the hand require the same space between the fingers as real ones do. Noticing and duplicating physical reactions not only develops pantomime skills but also encourages increased sensual awareness.

* Once students have practiced handling small objects they can move on to larger ones such as walls, doors, tables, etc. using the same training procedure. The teacher should encourage the students to keep their imaginary walls vertical and solid and to establish the plane of the wall by precise and consistent touching. Doors and doorknobs should stay the same size as they are turned and opened. Making frequent comparisons between the real and pantomimed experience can be helpful.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 2 OBJECT REACTIONS (Using a Real Object as a Focus)

CONCEPT: Reactions to objects convey a great deal of information about their physical qualities.

OBJECTIVE: To develop sense memory and refine skills in displaying physical qualities of objects through pantomime.

MATERIALS: A number of small objects such as a pencil, a small pillow, a dish, etc. to serve as a focus for the reactions in this exercise.

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* Often the <u>way</u> we handle things gives other people information about the objects. Today I am going to pass a number of ordinary objects around the room and I would like you to react to them as if they were something else which I will announce to you.

* Pass this pencil around the room and handle it as if it were: a sticky piece of candy, a bar of gold, a dead worm, a very sharp knife, etc.

* Pass this small pillow (or book) around the room and react to it as if it were: a baby, a pumpkin, a time bomb, a valuable antique vase, a bowl of hot soup, a roasted chicken, etc.

* Pass this dish around the room and handle it as if it were: hot, sticky, dirty, slippery, cracked and about to break, filled with food and very heavy, etc.

* Pass this small box around the room. Pretend it is a gift and open it as if it were: exactly what you wanted, so expensive you are awed by it, something you really don't care for but you don't want to hurt the feelings of the person who gave it to you, a joke gift which you don't find funny, etc.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* As a beginning exercise it is often helpful to have a real object which is similar in size and shape to the type of object specified in the exercise. In later exercises more advanced students can dispense with the "focus" object and react to empty space.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 3 PASS THE OBJECT

CONCEPT: Physical reactions can create the illusion of an object in the imagination of an audience.

OBJECTIVE: To develop observation skills, sense memory and to refine muscle control required for successful pantomime.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Today we are going to pass an imaginary object around the room. Even though it's invisible it still has the size and weight of a real thing. I'm going to start the game by handing the object to one of you. I'll tell you what it is so please handle it the way you would if it was the real thing.

* How heavy is your object? What does it feel like to touch? What makes this object different from another one that's almost the same size and weight? What would you use this object for? Pretend you are using it and show us how you would do it. Do you have any feelings about the object? Is it friendly or scary or expensive or dirty, etc.?

* Now change the object into something else and pass it on to the next person. Describe the object before you pass it on.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* As a variation on this exercise the identity of the object could be whispered to the next person and the class could try to guess what the object is. The objects could be restricted to a particular category such as a toy, animal, liquid, food, article of clothing, etc. The teacher can be helpful in "side coaching" by asking questions which draw attention to the special qualities of each object.

* This exercise can also be used to stretch the imagination. Once the general identities of objects are established students can be asked to give detailed descriptions of the specific objects they have imagined displaying the specific features to the class as they describe. Specific questions from the teacher can help stimulate this process.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 4 IMAGINARY SCAVENGER HUNT

CONCEPT: Physical reactions to objects can create those objects in the imagination of an audience.

OBJECTIVE: To stretch imagination, to develop skills in pantomime and to promote a spirit of cooperation.

MATERIALS: Empty cloth or paper bags. Lists of imaginary objects to find.

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* Today we are going to break the class up into teams and go on a scavenger hunt. Normally in a scavenger hunt you collect real objects from a list and put them in your bag but today we're going to collect imaginary objects rather than real ones.

* Let's pretend that the objects you are collecting are invisible. Only you can see them so you must handle them in a way that will help the rest of the class understand what they are like.

* In your small groups look over your lists and help each other decide what qualities each object would have. What is the object's shape? How heavy is it? What would you do with this kind of object? When you touch it what does it feel like? Do you have any emotional reactions to it?

* Pantomime putting the different objects in your bag. Help each other by watching to see that the qualities of each object are made clear by the way it is handled.

* After a few minutes we'll get the whole class back together and the players on each team will take turns removing the objects from their bag. Remember that the objects are invisible. You must handle them clearly and carefully so we can all understand what they are like.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* There are many variations on this exercise: one team member could announce the name of the object as another pantomimes removing it from the bag or it might be fun for the whole group to guess what the object is supposed to be. The lists could contain the names of real objects ranging from common to very unusual or they could range to more abstract concepts such as "a happy smile," "a meadowlark's song," "a ray of sunshine," etc.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 5 SIMPLE ACTIONS

CONCEPT: People can understand the meaning of an action through observing the reactions of the human body. Accurately duplicating these reactions can produce the illusion of a real action.

OBJECTIVE: To increase the students' sensitivity to physical reactions and to develop muscle control which can facilitate more defined physical expression.

MATERIALS: None required. However, cards with specific simple actions written on them might be helpful.

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* If someone clearly goes through all the motions of an action, other people can usually understand what the action is, even if there are no real objects used. I am going to name (have you draw a card which names) a particular activity. I would like you to go through all the motions you would make if you were actually doing that action. Try to handle any imaginary objects in exactly the same way you would real ones.

* Here are some actions you can do: sweep the floor, pull taffy, crack an egg, cut and serve a piece of cake, hammer a nail, shake a rug, fill a glass with water, place a stamp on an envelope, dial a phone, put a shoe on and tie it, take a picture with a camera, etc.

* Now let's do the same action again but this time we'll add a problem. For example: as you sweep you discover there is a piece of paper which is stuck to the floor. You try sweeping it again and again but it just won't come loose. What do you do next? Don't forget about the broom. Even though it's imaginary it will not just float in space by itself. Put the broom down before you try to peel the piece of paper from the floor.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Performing simple actions clearly is a fundamental skill in pantomime. Later these simple actions will be organized into a sequence which tells a story. Encourage the students to perform each pantomime precisely and clearly.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 6 PERFORMING AN ACTION (Pantomime)

CONCEPT: The illusion of an action can be created without words or props through careful pantomime. Sometimes the absence of props or words can give a new insight into common activities.

OBJECTIVE: To convey the presence of simple, imagined objects with clarity and a sense of size and space relationship and to convey the meaning of an action without words.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Tomorrow I would like you to do a pantomime of some common action you do often such as washing dishes, feeding your dog, getting ready for school in the morning, etc. In a pantomime you do all the actions you would normally do without saying anything or making any noises, and rather than using real things you pretend they are there.

* Your pantomime will seem more realistic if you do everything exactly as if it were real so before we have our next class I would like you to actually do the thing you are going to pantomime and carefully feel and observe how you do it. We have done some other exercises where we have pantomimed simple objects. In this assignment you may be handling many imaginary things but the same rules for good pantomime still apply. Treat everything as if it has the same shape, size, weight, smell, taste, etc. as the real thing.

* (The following day) Today we are going to see the pantomimes you have prepared. Afterwards we'll talk about what made them good and what improvements you could make so they will be even better. During the pantomime I might ask you some questions to help you make the pantomime more clear. Don't answer in words. Just show us the answer through your actions.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* As suggested above "side coaching" from the teacher can be a tremendous aid in refining these pantomimes. Using a gentle tone of voice so as not to break the performer's concentration or draw the audience's attention away from the pantomime the teacher can ask questions about the specific imaginary objects which are being manipulated, thus encouraging the performer to be more defined in his or her movements. For example if the

pantomime is "getting ready for school in the morning" the teacher might ask: "What kind of a morning is it? Is it cold and snowy outside or bright and sunny? What kind of clothes would you wear on a day like this? Show us exactly which clothes you have chosen to wear. What does the toothpaste taste like as you brush your teeth?, etc."

* This is not just an exercise in performance. It encourages keen observation and increased sensitivity to the sensual details of experiences of everyday life. Often by "abstracting" an experience in pantomime we can discover truths about that experience which are easily missed in the real situation.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 7 BEING SOMETHING

CONCEPT: The way something moves can be as important as physical appearance in defining its unique identity.

OBJECTIVE: To help students discover the unique movement patterns which define people, animals and all moving things.

MATERIALS: Cards with the names of things to "be" written on them. Depending on the age or experience of the students such things as a bear, a horse, a mother, an old man, a tree, a fire, a nurse, etc., could be written on the cards.

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* We all recognize things by the way they look but sometimes we also recognize them by the way they move.

* The names of different kinds of people, animals and things are written on these cards. I'd like each one of you to pick a card from the deck and move like the thing that is named on the card. The class will try to guess what you are acting out. Afterwards we'll talk about what makes the movement of that particular thing so special.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This activity might be an excellent follow-up to a film about animals or machines, a field trip to a zoo or factory, or any activity in which students have an opportunity to observe unique styles of movement. (It is interesting to note that we often ascribe human personalities to certain animals and machines because we recognize movement patterns similar to those of people who display those traits of personality.)

UNIT II ACTIVITY 8 PANTOMIME CIRCUS

CONCEPT: Skillful pantomime can create the illusion of a real experience.

OBJECTIVE: To stretch imagination and to develop skills in observation and pantomime.

MATERIALS: None are really required but as an option a few simple props or costume pieces might add to the experience. The students could improvise from items at hand or bring some things from home. A few hand painted signs and perhaps some circus music played in the background might help create the appropriate atmosphere.

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* We're going to put on a pantomime circus and I'd like each one of you to take the part of a circus performer or animal. We can have clowns and jugglers and tight rope walkers and lion tamers or anything you would like. We don't need real cages or tight ropes or clubs to juggle. We just need to pretend they are there and pantomime the motions. Which circus performer or animal would you like to be?

* Some of the characters you have chosen would usually work together in a real circus so I will break you into small groups to work on your "act." Then later we'll all get back together and perform the circus. If you are not in the center ring you can be the audience and watch what the others have practiced.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise might follow a film, videotape, or field trip relating to a real circus. The exercise could be done within a single class or it might be performed for other classes of younger students who could be invited to view the finished product.

Adapted from: Children and Dramatics, by Richard Crosscup, New York, NY, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 9 SHOW YOUR FEELINGS (Pantomime)

CONCEPT: Outward physical actions and reactions can reveal the emotions people are experiencing.

OBJECTIVE: To become sensitive to the physical expression of emotion and to develop the ability for communicating emotion through pantomime.

MATERIALS: (Optional) Cards with the names of various emotional states written on them. Such emotions as anger, fear, happiness, excitement, pride, curiosity, vanity, anticipation, sorrow and hatred might be included.

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* Today we are going to talk about feelings. What are some of the feelings that you have experienced? (In stimulating this discussion it might be helpful to suggest some situations that would prompt certain kinds of emotions.)

* Since feelings are on the inside how can we figure out the emotions that other people are feeling? What do they do that reveals their inner feelings? What are some things that people do when they are happy?, sad?, etc.

* I am going to break you up into small groups and I would like each group to show us a particular emotion through pantomime. (The teacher can have each group draw a card with the name of an emotion on it or the teacher can simply assign an emotion to each group.)

* Feelings are really reactions to things that happen to us so don't be afraid to pantomime a little story that shows us the cause of the feelings you are trying to present. Just be sure to show the feeling as clearly as possible.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* For beginning groups the name of the emotion could be announced before the pantomime is performed. More advanced groups could treat the exercise as a game with the full class trying to guess the name of the emotion being performed by each small group. This exercise offers many opportunities for discussing feelings and the physical clues that reveal different emotional states.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 10 CHARACTERIZATION (Pantomime)

CONCEPT: People reveal details of their personality not only by their appearance but also by the way they move. Adopting the movements of a particular character can help an actor create the illusion of that character.

OBJECTIVE: To recognize physical character details and to externalize and communicate a sense of character.

MATERIALS: None required

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* We often recognize different kinds of people by the way they look but we can also identify people by what they do and how they move. Today we are going to do some pantomimes and I would like you to show the rest of the group who you are through your movements.

* Let's pretend that you are a group of people at a supermarket or shopping center. There might be shop clerks, cowboys, joggers, janitors, teen-agers, old people, police officers, etc. Pick out an interesting character and show us your personality through what you are doing and how you do it.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* As a variation on this exercise individual character pantomimes could be assigned. A unit of study in another subject such as social science or geography might provide a variety of roles to perform. A discussion of physical details that reveal character should follow all performances.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 11 ONE ACTION AS THREE DIFFERENT CHARACTERS

CONCEPT: People do the same thing in a variety of ways. These differences help define the character's personality.

OBJECTIVE: To identify and display the various ways people do the same activity and to discover the effect this has on the meaning of the activity.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Sometimes people do the same activity in different ways. These differences help us discover things about their personalities. It can also help us discover how they feel about what they are doing.

* I am going to ask each one of you to pantomime a simple activity but I want you to do the activity three times. Each time you do it I want you to perform the action as a different character.

* Pretend that you are in a restaurant and are about to order a meal. Do the action as:

  1. A teen-age boy or girl who is very hungry.

  2. A middle-aged person who has very little appetite and sees nothing on the menu that is appetizing.

  3. Someone who is very hungry but very poor and must limit choices to what is affordable.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* After each series of three pantomimes has been performed discuss the differences in the way the activity is performed and the meanings these differences reveal. The teacher can invent many different actions and characters. Some suggestions might include the following:

* You are trying on clothes in a store. Do it as:

  1. A tall boy who can't find shirts with long enough sleeves.

  2. A young girl looking for a pretty dress to wear to a dance.

  3. A mother who is looking for an outfit for her teen-age daughter. (They wear almost the same size.)

* You are exercising in a gymnasium. Do the exercises as:

1. A young person who loves athletics.
2. An older person who has been advised to lose weight.
3. A young person who has never used weight lifting equipment before.

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 12 BELIEVABLE ENTRANCES

CONCEPT: Physical reactions can reveal details of character and situation.

OBJECTIVE: To develop the ability for expressing details of character in specific situations.

MATERIALS: None required. However, a set of cards with specific entrance pantomimes described on them might be useful.

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* In the theatre the first thing an audience sees is often very important. First impressions are as important in plays as they are in real life. Today I will be asking different individuals or groups to make pantomime entrances. By the way you move or react you must show the audience who you are and what the basic situation is. (NOTE: The teacher can simply assign the situation by describing it out loud or the instructions could be written on cards which each player draws from a deck. If cards are used the situation could be announced to the rest of the class before the pantomime is performed or the class could be asked to view the pantomime and then guess the situation before the information on the card is revealed.)

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Here are some suggestions for entrance pantomimes:

* A young person comes off a plane to greet a good friend or boring relative.

* A young child enters the kitchen, looking for forbidden cookies.

* A hiker finally reaches a mountain top after climbing all day.

* A baby-sitter enters to check on sleeping children.

* A teacher enters a classroom where students are misbehaving.

* A child enters a living room where a parent sits reading his/her bad report card.

Adapted from: Theatre Games for Young Performers, by Maria C. Novelly, Colorado Springs, CO, Meriwether Publishing Ltd., © 1985.

UNIT II ACTIVITY 13 STORY OVERDUBBING

CONCEPT: Stories can be told through actions as well as through words.

OBJECTIVE: To further develop the student's ability for physically communicating objects, situations, and personalities. This exercise also serves to introduce the principles of storytelling and dramatic structure which will be developed more fully in a later unit.

MATERIALS: A written text of a short story or narrative poem. (The students can provide suggestions and help in the selection of the particular story to be used.)

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* We often read stories or tell them to each other but when we just <u>say</u> the words an important part of the story is missing . . . THE ACTION! Today I'd like to have all of you help me add actions to the story we are going to read.

* First let's read through the story together so we are all familiar with it. Afterwards we'll talk about the important details in the story and plan the actions we are going to add.

* Who was involved in this story? What was each of the characters like? How would that kind of person act and move? Where did the story take place and what things did the characters use in the story? How would you pantomime the objects and surroundings in the story? Does the story have a moral? Is there any lesson we can learn from what happened? Who would like to be the different characters and things in this story? If everyone doesn't get a chance to play a part the first time we can do the story again with a different cast. If you don't play a part the first time, watch carefully so you can use the best ideas from the first group and then add improvements of your own.

* Now that we have our cast chosen lets decide where all the imaginary things in the story are supposed to be and where our characters will make their entrances and exits.

* Now I'm going to read the story again. As I read, our cast members should do the action the story calls for in the way they think their characters would do it. Afterwards we'll talk about what happened and, perhaps, do the exercise again with a new cast.

* Now that we've seen our first performance lets ask some questions to see if we can make it even better the next time we do it. Were the personalities of all the characters made clear by the way they moved? Could we tell what they were thinking or how they were feeling by the way they acted? Is there anything else the actors could have done to present their characters more clearly? Could we tell which objects or surroundings were being used in the story? How could we make these ideas easier to understand? Does seeing the action as well as hearing the words help you understand the story better? Are there any details that the action provides which go beyond the words of the story?

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Before doing this exercise the teacher might make the point that actions can tell stories by showing a short film or videotape with the sound turned off. It's amazing how clearly a story can be told without words and since the absence of sound forces viewers to concentrate more intensely on action, the audience can often notice subtle details of physical communication that they might have overlooked with the sound turned on.

* Many variations could be done on the basic pantomime exercise described above. Simply repeating the exercise many times with different stories is valuable since students tend to be more involved and discover ideas and details that they might have missed through words alone.

* Instead of having the teacher read the story, more advanced groups of students could be assigned character and narration parts to read. While one group of students reads the story, another group could act it out in pantomime. Another variation might be to play a recorded story from a children's record album. The addition of music and sound effects which these albums often provide can introduce new dimensions to the exercise.

UNIT II

RESOURCES

FILMS of pantomime:

The Cube, 56 minutes, National Broadcasting Co., TV

In the Park, 13 minutes, Contemporary Films

Pantomimes, 13 minutes, George K. Arthur, Go Pictures

The Tramp, and other films by Charlie Chaplin

(**Special Note**: Many of the films of Charlie Chaplin and other pantomime artists are available in both video cassette and super 8mm film formats from the North Dakota State Library. Many inexpensive video cassettes of Chaplin's films are currently available for purchase or rental from local video stores.)

BOOKS:

Cuvelier, Eugene-Henri: Le Mime, Paris, F. Nathan, 1981.

McCaslin, Nellie: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

Nobleman, Roberta: Mime and Masks, Rowayton, CT, New Plays Books, 1979.

Stanley, Susan M.: Drama Without Script: The Practice of Improvised Drama, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1980.

Wilkinson, Helen: Spontaneity and Imagination in Drama: An Investigation, England, Drama Resource Centre, 1980.

MATERIALS to facilitate exploration of pantomime might include full-length mirrors so students can observe their own pantomime. Videotape equipment can also allow students to make critical evaluations of their own performances. Neutral scenic modules to use as steps, levels, or seats as well as some basic costume pieces and hand properties might be useful aids in developing pantomime scenes.

UNIT III

SIMPLE IMPROVISATION

Improvisation is a creative, cooperative, and spontaneous response to rapidly changing and unanticipated stimuli. It involves setting out to solve a problem with no preconception of how it will be done. The basis of an improvisation is the situation and the problem to be solved.

Some of the pantomime exercises in the previous unit involved improvisation. The major difference in this unit is the addition of sound. Words and tone of voice are as much a part of our natural capacity to make believe as is movement. Even when young children are playing alone they ad-lib their thoughts and feelings with freedom and conviction. Although the physical communication of pantomime can convey a tremendous amount of information, the addition of words and sounds can define ideas with even greater precision. Children need to be offered experiences that challenge their creativity through imagining what a person or thing would say in a given situation and how they would say it.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT ARE TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS:

--to respond quickly, imaginatively, and in cooperation with others to rapidly changing stimuli,

--to use appropriately the total environment in solving an improvisation problem (i.e., the room, furniture, other people),

--to develop increasingly sophisticated characterization, using voice, movement, emotional involvement in interactions of increasing complexity.

It should be stressed that improvisation is a process for developing creative solutions. Although discoveries made through improvisation can later be structured into a scene or play for performance (playmaking will be the focus of the next unit) the experimental process of improvisation is usually inappropriate for presentation to an audience. The popularity of improvisational theatre groups such as "Saturday Night Live" has created the mistaken impression that the audience is viewing "instant creativity" when in reality the improvisation took place during a week of experiments. What the audience finally sees is a scripted performance which preserves the successes and leaves out all the experimental failures. Many improvisations will simply not produce brilliant theatre. This does not mean the process is flawed. A biochemist is not expected to discover a new wonder drug every time an experiment is performed. The benefits of improvisation develop through discussing a situation, playing the improvisation, evaluating the results, and then replaying the problem many times to explore all the possible variations.

Although improvisation cannot always be expected to bear fruit some basic rules can increase the chances for making creative discoveries. In preparing for an improvisation exercise it might be wise to review these basic rules with the participants.

RULES FOR IMPROVISATION

1. DON'T ASK QUESTIONS. A question merely transfers the burden of creativity to someone else.

2. MAKE ASSUMPTIONS. (Instead of asking "Where were you just now?" say "I'll bet you just came from the lunchroom." This assumption is a creative input which will lead the scene in a new direction.)

3. DON'T NEGATE. When someone gives you an assumption go with it and add new assumptions of your own. Don't say "no." Say "Yes, and they're serving pizza today!" The idea is to combine everyone's creativity to produce new solutions.

4. GIVE AND TAKE. One person should not dominate the scene. No idea is better than any other idea. An idea is only as good as its development, and it is developed only by working together as a team.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 1 WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

CONCEPT: Requiring quick response to a suggestion can increase creativity.

OBJECTIVE: To develop rapid and imaginative responses to suggested concepts.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Today we are going to play a game which challenges your creativity and requires you to think and act fast. The game is called "What are you doing?"

* To start the game I will ask one of you to go to the front of the room. Then I'll ask another student to walk up to the first student and ask, "What are you doing?" The first student can say anything that comes to mind and the second student must immediately act out what the first student says. As soon as the suggestion has been acted out another student can walk up to the student who just acted out the suggestion and ask "What are you doing?" Each time a suggestion is made it must be acted out immediately. Anyone who hesitates is out of the game. We'll play until only one person is left. This is a very fast paced game so you must think of unusual ideas and be able to respond instantly to the suggestions you hear.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This game is challenging and fun once the students get the idea that practically anything goes. Such suggestions as "gluing my nose to the floor," "washing my bicycle with a toothbrush," "making a sculpture out of mashed potatoes," "pouring honey into my underwear," etc. are only a few of the limitless possibilities. Students, especially in the lower grades, usually display good taste in such situations but if questionable suggestions become a problem, a new rule could be added which would disqualify any person who makes a suggestion the group feels is out of line.

* The teacher could act as a judge on hesitation and matters of taste or judging could be done by the group itself.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 2 SIMPLE IMPROVISATION (Based on Situations)

CONCEPT: A basic situation can stimulate an improvised story line.

OBJECTIVE: To develop imagination and the ability to respond quickly in cooperation with others in creating and performing dramatic stories.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Today we are going to improvise some little plays. I will break the class up into smaller groups and give each group a basic situation. I want the members of each group to pretend that they are actually living through the situation and to act out whatever you think might really happen.

* You can talk about the situation for a few minutes in your small groups so you are sure you really understand what is going on. Then each group can do their scene for the rest of the class. Afterwards we'll talk about what happened. If we have time we might do the same situation again with a different group.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* The teacher can invent many situations for simple improvisations. Some possible suggestions are listed below:

* All of you are toys in a toyshop on Christmas eve. It is nearly midnight and the owner has just locked up for the night. At the stroke of midnight the toys all come alive and talk together. Let us know what kind of a toy you are and why you were not sold by the way you move and by what you say.

* Your teacher is retiring and you are all on a committee to select the gift. You all have ideas on what to get but you have a limited amount of money to spend. The scene takes place in a large gift shop. Let us know who you are and what you want to buy for the teacher. What is the decision your group finally makes.

* It is Valentine's day and everyone is opening valentine boxes to count the valentines they have received. One of the students did not receive a single valentine. How do you feel about this? Do you decide to do anything about it? If so what do you do?

* You are a group of children who live near a very cross, elderly woman. She always chases you away from her house whenever you come near it. Today you notice that someone has broken her fence and ruined many of her flowers. For the first time you feel sorry for her. What do you do? How does she react to you? Do your actions change her attitude towards children? Each of you should show us who you are. Decide who will play the old lady.

* A new student from a foreign country has entered your class at school. He does not speak much English and some of the students laugh at him. It is recess and you are all out on the playground. Who will play the new student? How do each of you react to him? Do you finally let him join your group or do you exclude him? We may do this scene several times and you can take turns being the foreign student.

* The scene is a small bakery. One of you is the owner and one of you is a child who helps the owner on Saturdays. One of you plays the part of a beggar. The owner has gone out for a few minutes, leaving the child helper alone in the store, when the beggar comes into the shop and asks for some bread. The child in the shop knows that bread should not be given away, but feels sorry for the beggar. What happens? What does the owner do and say upon returning? Try changing parts when we do the scene again and see if the story turns out differently.

* You are a group of children having a party at a friend's house. Someone new to the neighborhood has been invited. After the party has been going for a few minutes the host notices that her portable radio is missing. One by one, you begin to suspect the newcomer. Why do you suspect this person? Did he or she take the radio? What happens?

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 3 SIMPLE IMPROVISATION (Suggested by Costume)

CONCEPT: A costume piece can suggest a character which in turn can provide the inspiration for an improvised story.

OBJECTIVE: To develop a flexible imagination and quick response to creative stimuli, and to encourage the development of increasingly sophisticated characterization.

MATERIALS: A selection of interesting costume pieces or accessories such as hats, scarves, etc.

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* In this box (sack, closet, etc.) are many articles of clothing. I'd like each of you to select one thing and put it on. Does the article suggest some kind of person to you? If you were the real owner of the article what would you be like? How would you act?

* After you have thought about your character for a minute I am going to arrange you in small groups. How would your characters react to each other? What do you think these people would say to each other? What circumstances might have brought them together? Improvise a little story based on your characters. Afterwards we'll talk about who you were and what happened.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* As variation on this exercise each student could be asked to draw an item from a sack or box and put it on without looking at it. Then all the members of a group could open their eyes and try to respond spontaneously to the characters suggested by the costume pieces. (This variation would probably work best with more advanced groups.)

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 4 SIMPLE IMPROVISATION (For Two or Three Characters)

CONCEPT: A basic situation and characters can stimulate an improvised story line.

OBJECTIVE: To develop imagination and the ability to respond quickly in cooperation with others in creating and performing dramatic stories.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Today we are going to improvise some little stories. I'll select two or three people at a time and assign you a situation and characters to present. Pretend that you actually are the person I describe and that you are really living through the situation I suggest. What do you think your character would do and say? What would be likely to happen in each situation? After we see each scene we'll talk about the characters and what happened between them.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise can be very helpful in clarifying values or teaching a lesson about human relationships. The teacher can invent many appropriate characters and situations. Here are some suggestions:

* You receive a letter in the mail, telling you that you have won first prize in a contest you entered. Unfortunately your mother told you not to enter the contest. How do you tell her the "good" news.

* Your dog has been hit by a car and is very seriously injured. Your brother (or sister) meets you at the door when you arrive home and tells you what happened.

* You are moving to a new city. Your best friend comes around to say good-bye to you. You are looking forward to your new home but you are sad to leave your old city and friends behind. What do you do and say?

* You have found a kitten that you want to keep but your father has said you cannot have a pet. Try to convince him to let you keep it.

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* You have been wanting a portable tape player for your birthday. Your grandmother, who always selects the right presents, comes to your house with a brightly wrapped box in her hands. You open it and find that it contains a new sweater that she knitted herself. How do you both react? What do you say?

* You wore your sister's favorite bracelet (or your brother's favorite hat) on a picnic without asking permission. When you got home you realized you lost it. Now you must explain what happened.

* You are helping a friend deliver papers. You throw one toward a house and accidentally break a window. You tell the friend what happened just as the owner of the house comes out the door. What happens next?

* You and a friend find a five dollar bill on the sidewalk. You decide to share the money but at that moment a young girl you have never met notices the money and says she lost it. You think she may be lying just to get the cash. What happens next?

* Your mother has just given one of your old toys to a younger cousin who is visiting you. Although you are too old to play with it any more the toy has a special meaning for you. Although you don't want to give up the toy you are afraid of embarrassing your mother by making an issue out of it. How do you handle the situation?

* You and your friend are going to the playground. Your little brother wants to go with you, but you want to play with the older kids and don't want to baby-sit. What do you do?

Adapted from: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., by Nellie McCaslin, White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 5 SIMPLE IMPROVISATION (Based on Real People)

CONCEPT: Real people can provide the foundation for expanded characterizations which, in turn, can stimulate improvised stories.

OBJECTIVE: To develop sensitivity to real character details as well as to clarify human values and to encourage imagination.

MATERIALS: None required

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* All people are very special and interesting and every human being has a unique story to tell. I'd like each one of you to think of an interesting person you saw or met recently. You don't have to know this person well. It might just be someone you saw on the street, but I would like you to choose someone you found very interesting. Pick someone who made you wonder "What does this person do, think, and feel?" After you've had a chance to think about it for a few minutes I'd like each of you to tell us a little bit about the person you've chosen. What does he/she look like? How does he/she move? What do you find special and interesting about this person?

* Now that we know something about your character I'd like each one of you to become your character. I'd like you to play the part of that special person as we improvise some little scenes. As you improvise try to think of what your character would do, say, and feel. Afterwards we'll talk about your characters and what happened in the scene.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* After the students have introduced their characters the teacher can group the students and provide simple improvisation situations that are likely to encourage interaction. Variations on this exercise could use real people and situations from current events as the basis for characters in an improvisation. As an enhancement to history lessons, students could improvise scenes based on real historical characters and situations.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 6 ONE WORD-THREE SITUATIONS

CONCEPT: The meaning of a word depends on the context in which it is spoken.

OBJECTIVE: To make the student aware of the effect of character, surroundings, and tone of voice on the meanings of words.

MATERIALS: None required but cards with suggested words written on them might be helpful.

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* We say some words many times a day but we often use the same word to mean different things. The meaning of the word is affected by who is saying it, where it is said, the circumstances of the conversation in which it is said and the tone of voice in which it is spoken.

* I am going to break the class up into small groups. Each group will be given a particular word. I would like each group to present three short improvised scenes using their assigned word so that it has a different meaning in each scene. (For example: A young boy who had just received a puppy as a gift would say "thank you" with a different meaning than a boy who was thanking a policeman for informing him that his dog had been killed by a hit-and-run driver. "Thank you" would have still another meaning if it was said sarcastically to someone who offered a "back-handed compliment.")

* Here are some commonly used words which could be used in this exercise: well, welcome, never, so, I guess, don't, good, thank you, sorry, why, really, please, good-bye.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* An interesting variation on this exercise might be to have each group use their word three times in the same short scene but to use the word in such a way that it has a different meaning each time it is used.

Adapted from: Theatre Games for Young Performers, by Maria C. Novelly, Colorado Springs, CO, Meriwether Publishing Ltd., © 1985.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 7 JUSTIFIED ENDINGS

CONCEPT: A variety of circumstances could lead to the same conclusion.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage creativity in developing believable circumstances which could lead to an unusual conclusion.

MATERIALS: None required

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* Sometimes there are perfectly logical explanations for events which appear to be strange or unusual. I'm going to break the class up into small groups and give each group an ending for a scene. I want each group to think of circumstances which would logically lead to their conclusion. After you've had a few moments to discuss the project in your own group I'll be asking each group to improvise their scene and end it with their assigned conclusion.

* After each group has performed their improvisation we may do some of the endings over to find other possible circumstances which could result in that conclusion.

* For example an ending like "placing a beautifully decorated cake in a garbage can and walking away" might have been preceded by the following actions: preparing a surprise birthday party for the trash collector, learning with disappointment that the guest of honor will not be able to attend a birthday celebration, discovering that the cake was accidentally made with contaminated ingredients, etc.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* The teacher can invent many unusual endings for this exercise. Some suggestions might include the following:

* Burning up the homework you just did.

* Taking a big sip of vinegar.

* Pulling a nylon stocking over your head.

* Filling a large plastic sack with inflated balloons.

* Filling your pockets with ice cubes.

UNIT III ACTIVITY 8 LIVING NEWSPAPER

CONCEPT: An improvisation can be a valuable tool to explore human values in real life situations.

OBJECTIVE: To encourage student sensitivity to details of character and situation and to develop the ability to project reasonable outcomes based on known conditions.

MATERIALS: An interesting and thought provoking newspaper article. (Note: human interest type stories often make the best choices for this exercise.)

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* Drama doesn't always have to be true but it should be true to life. Today we are going to improvise a short scene based on a real event. I'm going to read a newspaper article to you which describes real events that happened to real people. Then I'd like some of you to take the parts of the people in the story and we'll improvise a scene based on the situations in the article. We might play the improvisation several times and change some of the details to see what affect those changes might have on the way things turned out.

* Listen carefully as I read the newspaper story. What are the most important actions in the story? What are some important things about the personalities of the people who were involved? Where did the event take place? Did the surroundings have any effect on the way things turned out? What was the relationship between the people involved in the story? How did they feel about each other? Did they disagree on anything? How did they work out their difficulties? In our earlier work we have looked for the moral or theme in fables and short stories. Can you think of any lesson this real life story proves? How could we make this lesson more clear in our improvisation?

* Who would like to play the parts of the various characters in this story? We may do this improvisation again so if you don't get a chance to play a part the first time, watch carefully! You might be playing one of the parts the <u>next</u> time we do it. Are there any properties or objects that would be helpful in doing the improvisation? We know what the original surroundings of the story were like. Let's decide where everything like doors, windows, etc. should be and plan where our characters should enter and exit.

* All right, let's improvise. Afterwards we'll talk about what happened. Then we might do the improvisation again with a few changes to discover other ways the story might have turned out.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* This exercise is an ideal technique to develop interest and involvement in social science or current events. Very sophisticated discussions on human values and the consequences of actions can be based on these improvisations and by actually acting the parts of the real participants, students can gain increased understanding and appreciation.

* The technique is also adaptable to the study of history by simply using a written account of a historical event as the basis for the exercise.

UNIT III

RESOURCES

FILMS to stimulate spontaneous, creative thought and response:

Adventures of Asterisk, 10 minutes, Contemporary Films

Begone Dull Care, 8 minutes, International Film Bureau

A Windy Day, 12 minutes, Grove Press Film Division

BOOKS:

Alexander, Robert: Improvisational Theatre for the Classroom, Washington, DC, 1983.

James, Ronald: A Guide to Improvisation, 2d ed., Banbury, England, Kemble Press, 1981.

McCaslin, Nellie: Creative Drama in the Classroom, 4th ed., White Plains, NY, Longman Inc., 1984.

Spolin, Viola: Improvisation for the Theatre, Evanston, IL, Northwestern University Press, 1983.

Stanley, Susan M.: Drama Without Script: The Practice of Improvised Drama, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1980.

Wilkinson, Helen: Spontaneity and Imagination in Drama: An Investigation, England, Drama Resource Centre, 1980.

MATERIALS:

Include costumes and properties that might be used in actual improvisational scenes to stimulate the spontaneous, creative process itself. Some examples: string, wood, foil, "at hand objects," music, records, paintings, photos, hats, shawls, squares of cloth, canes, eyeglasses, a simple public address system.

UNIT IV

PLAYMAKING

Playmaking is literally the making of a play. An original story is improvised and supported by sensory awareness, movement, pantomime, dialogue, and perhaps even singing and dancing. It is carefully structured and planned. It is played, evaluated and replayed. In short, a play is the finished product of a theatre artist's work. The focus of this curriculum has always been on process rather than product so it should be emphasized that the play need not be presented for an audience in order for the exercise of playmaking to be successful. Even if the play is seen only by its own cast and crew, the process of structuring the discoveries made in earlier units to produce a finished work of theatre art is a valuable educational experience.

This unit will focus on the process of dramatic storytelling which involves carefully editing and structuring experiences and ideas so that meaning becomes clear. It will also deal with some of the technical details of theatre art such as characterization, conflict, exposition, dialogue, blocking, diction, costumes, makeup, scenery, and lighting.

THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THIS UNIT ARE TO ENCOURAGE THE STUDENT:

--to listen carefully to a story being told dramatically and to recall specific situations, plot, setting, and characterization,

--to take an active part in planning a dramatization,

--to clarify and develop a theme or idea using the fundamental elements of dramatic structure, such as characterization, conflict, exposition, complication, crisis, and resolution,

--to play a wide variety of roles with honesty and originality,

--to communicate to an audience of peers by clear, intelligent gestures, facial expressions, vocal projection, and expression,

--to experiment with some of the technical processes of play production such as makeup, lighting, costume and scenery construction.

Ideally the original stories which are dramatized in the playmaking process are developed by the students themselves. Realistically the development of a well-structured story line is a demanding process which may prove too challenging for all but the most experienced students in the upper grades or junior high school. As an alternative to developing completely original stories students can adapt favorite nursery stories or folk tales for dramatic presentation.

In preliminary discussions of stories to be dramatized the structural elements of the plot can be analyzed and incorporated into the dramatized version. Rather than impose the choice of one particular story, creative dramatics expert Richard Crosscup recommends presenting several stories as options or asking the students themselves for suggestions on which tales they would like to develop.

There are many similarities between the structure of literary and dramatic stories. A brief overview of the storytelling process should be presented to the students and discussed before embarking on a project in dramatization.

THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMATIC STRUCTURE

One of the main reasons for telling a story is to illustrate a THEME or prove a point. We can learn many valuable lessons from stories, even FICTIONAL ones. Stories don't need to be true so long as they are true to life. Well-developed stories include all the details which are necessary for proving the story's point. Details which are not necessary should be eliminated because they might make the story too long and confuse the audience.

The ACTION of a story should support the story's THEME. In stories (as in real life) there is usually a reason or MOTIVATION for every ACTION that happens. The MOTIVATION for most action is usually a CONFLICT between people or situations. In chemistry when a substance like vinegar is mixed with more vinegar, very little happens. If, however, vinegar is added to baking soda the mixture fizzes and bubbles. In the same way CHARACTERS who are very similar and agree with each other tend to produce little ACTION. Characters who have strong disagreements tend to produce a great deal of action as they struggle to resolve their CONFLICTS. CONFLICTS can exist between individual characters, groups of characters, or even the different sides of one character's personality.

A dramatist develops a THEME by selecting characters whose CONFLICTS will produce ACTION that proves the point. This action must then be arranged in a particular order called the PLOT. A good PLOT builds excitement and interest in the audience so they are impressed by the point of the story when it is finally proven by the ACTION.

In order to understand the CONFLICTS in a story the audience must have some background information about the characters and setting. This EXPOSITION is usually presented at the very beginning of the story. Since many details of character or situation may have nothing to do with the THEME, a dramatist must avoid wasting time on IRRELEVANT EXPOSITION.

Once the audience understands the EXPOSITION, the PLOT begins with the INCITING INCIDENT, an action which forces the CONFLICTING characters together. (For example, two students who dislike each other might be assigned to work on the same committee to plan a holiday party.) This poses the MAJOR DRAMATIC QUESTION. (Will they be able to work out their differences and get the job done?) The PLOT builds DRAMATIC TENSION as the conflicting characters encounter COMPLICATIONS or disagreements which prevent them from achieving their goals. Tension builds until a CRISIS is reached where a decision has to be made. The decision provides a RESOLUTION to the immediate COMPLICATION but often produces a new and more difficult COMPLICATION which then builds to a new CRISIS and RESOLUTION. This process continues until the CLIMAX, or most serious CRISIS in the play, is reached. The play comes to an end when the FINAL RESOLUTION provides an answer to the MAJOR DRAMATIC QUESTION and illustrates the THEME. (For example the two students who disliked each other because they disagreed on plans for the school party could develop an alternative solution which is better than either of their original ideas, thus proving that "two heads are better than one.")

The basic steps in the playmaking process are as follows:

1. Develop or present the story.

2. Discuss the story to determine the THEME and define the CONFLICTS between the major characters. Discuss which details of EXPOSITION are essential for the audience to understand the PLOT.

3. IMPROVISE action and dialogue based on the CONFLICTS in the story.

4. Discuss the discoveries that were made through the improvised ACTION. Eliminate actions which are IRRELEVANT or unclear and arrange the best ACTIONS in the order of increasing DRAMATIC TENSION. Be sure the FINAL RESOLUTION clearly proves the THEME of the play.

5. Keep replaying and revising the story until the plot is effectively organized and the action and dialogue are clear and convincing.

UNIT IV **ACTIVITY 1** **PLAYMAKING (Based on a Fable or Folk Tale)**

CONCEPT: Familiar stories can be dramatized to develop an original play for production by students.

OBJECTIVE: To help students recognize the fundamental elements of dramatic structure through active participation in planning and performing a short original play.

MATERIALS: None are required although a storybook with brief written texts of popular fables or folk tales might be a valuable resource. Some simple props and costume pieces might be helpful as the playmaking process develops.

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* As a special project over the next few days we are going to make up a short play based on a familiar fable or folk tale. I am going to tell (read) you several short stories. Listen to each one carefully because later we'll be deciding on one story to make into our play. If there are any other stories that you especially like, let me know and we can consider those as well.

* Now that we've decided which story we are going to dramatize, let's go through it again so everyone can remember it clearly. Listen carefully because afterwards we're going to talk about where the story takes place, who is involved in it, what happens, and what the moral of the story might be.

* Now that you've heard the story again what lesson do you think it proves? How would you state the moral of this story? Why do you think the particular characters in this story were chosen? What details about their personalities make them good examples to prove the point of the story? In what ways are the main characters alike and different? What is the relationship between the main characters in the story? Do they get along well or do they disagree on some things? How do they try to work out their disagreements? Are they successful? Does one character "win" or do they work out a solution that satisfies everybody? Do you think the setting of the story helps to prove the point in any way? What particular details about the place or time of the action help prove the moral?

* Now that we understand the story more clearly lets try to improvise it as a play. Make up the actions and words as you go but be sure to act out the same story we've been discussing. Remember the important points in our story and stick to them. If you are playing one of the characters, remember the important details we talked about in our discussion and try to show these character traits clearly.

* After we've seen the first improvisation we'll talk about the actions and words that were most effective in proving the moral of the story. If anything is confusing or unclear we'll talk about ways to make it better. Then we'll play the improvisation again and another group of students will have a chance to play the parts. We may improvise and discuss many times until we make the play as clear and entertaining as possible.

* We might even add some simple scenery and costumes to give the play a more finished appearance. Everyone who isn't acting can help with the technical effects.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER:

* Most of Aesop's Fables, and many nursery or folk tales would be suitable choices for this exercise. Often the students can suggest their own favorites. Try to chose a story with a clear message and sharply defined characters. The development process can be extended over several days. As the action and dialogue becomes more refined, simple costume, makeup, and scenery effects could be added as an option.

* The finished play could be presented for another class of the same or lower grade level, a school assembly, or an audience of invited guests. However, the exercise need not be performed for <u>any</u> outsiders to be successful. If a more public performance is deemed inappropriate the finished play might be videotaped and replayed for its own cast and crew. In grade school creative dramatics an audience of peers is often preferable to a condescending audience of adults who may attend more for the sake of loyalty or parental pride than for a genuine appreciation of the story the students are trying to tell.

* The subject of the improvisation could also be a lesson from another school subject such as history or social science. Placing students in the shoes of historical personalities or figures from current events could reveal new perspectives and develop a level of involvement that goes far beyond textbook study.

UNIT IV

RESOURCES

FILMS:

Creative Drama - The First Steps, 28 minutes, Northwestern University

BOOKS for reference in developing original scripts:

Fitzgerald, Burdett S.: World Tales for Creative Dramatics and Storytelling, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1962.

Siks, Geraldine: Children's Literature for Dramatization, New York, NY, Harper and Row, 1964.

Stewig, John W.: Informal Drama in the Elementary Language Arts Program, New York, NY, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1983.

Via, Richard A.: Talk and Listen, Oxford, NY, Pergamon Press, 1983.

Ward, Winifred: Stories to Dramatize, Anchorage, KY, Anchorage Press, 1952.

BOOKS on play production and technical theatre:

Beck, Roy A. (and others): Play Production Today!, Skokie, IL, National Textbook Company, 1983.

Buerki, F. A.: Stagecraft for Nonprofessionals, Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press, 1962.

Hoggett, Chris: Stage Crafts, New York, NY, St. Martin's Press, 1975.

Kay, Drina: All the Desk's a Stage: The Elementary School Teacher's Creative Dramatics Handbook, Nashville, TN, Incentive Publications, 1982.

Wilder, Rosilyn: A Space Where Anything Can Happen: Creative Drama in a Middle School, Rowayton, CT, New Plays, Inc., 1977.

MAJOR DRAMATIC PUBLISHERS as sources for published scripts:

The Dramatic Publishing Company
P.O. Box 109
Woodstock, IL 60098

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.
440 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Samuel French, Inc.
45 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10010

INTEGRATING DRAMA INTO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM

Although drama is a subject in its own right and deserves recognition as such, it also has great application as a learning tool in other areas of the curriculum.

The following are sample activities which integrate drama into the basic subjects. They are listed in degree of complexity, the first in each section being the simplest.

SUBJECT: LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY 1 POETRY

Use poems to stimulate movement. Read the following poems to the class. Discuss them, asking the students for their ideas about the poems, moods and situations they suggest. Then have the students "play" the poems. The three poems form a natural sequence on a wet day.

"FOG" by Carl Sandburg[1]

The fog comes
on little cat feet.

It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on.

"RAIN" by Robert Louis Stevenson

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and trees,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

"MUD" by Polly Chase Boyden[2]

Mud is very nice to feel
All squishy-squash between the toes!
I'd rather wade in wiggly mud
Than smell a yellow rose!

Nobody else but the rosebush knows
How nice mud feels
Between the toes!

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[1]Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

[2]Reprinted by permission of Killian Jordan.

Children enjoy playing train with engines and cars. Details of the poem will be added as the students create their train. Read the poem and play it.

"TRAINS" by James S. Tippet

Over the mountains,
Over the plains,
Over the rivers,
Here come the trains,

Carrying passengers,
Carrying mail,
Bringing their precious loads
In without fail.

Thousands of freight cars
All rushing on
Through day and darkness
Through dusk and dawn.

Over the mountains,
Over the plains,
Over the rivers,
Here come the trains.

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Begin by asking the students the following questions: "If you could be the (loveliest, funniest, biggest, smallest, ugliest, wildest), thing in a circus, who would you choose to be?"

Read the poem several times, stopping for discussion.

"CIRCUS" by Eleanor Farjeon

The brass band blares,
The naptha flares,
The sawdust smells,
Showmen ring bells,
And ho! right into the circus ring
Comes such a lovely, lovely thing
A milk-white pony with flying tress,
And a beautiful lady,
A beautiful lady in a pink dress!
The red-and-white clown
For joy tumbles down,
Like a pink rose
Round she goes
On her tip-toes
With the pony under . . .
And then, oh wonder!
The pony, his milk-white tresses droop,
And the beautiful lady,
The beautiful lady,
Flies like a bird through the paper hoop!
The red-and-white clown for joy falls dead.
Then he waggles his feet and stands on his head,
And the little boys in the two-penny seats
Scream with laughter and suck on their sweets.

After reading the poem, ask the students, "If you could be a character in a circus, who would you be? What would your character do for his entertainment?" Have the students "play" circus doing their favorite character.

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SUBJECT: LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY 2 PUNCTUATION

After a review of punctuation, students may pantomime their interpretations of punctuation marks. Try the following:

Period (.)

Question Mark (?)

Colon (:)

Semicolon (;)

Comma (,)

Dash (-)

Quote Marks (" ")

Parentheses (())

Asterisk (*)

And (&)

Percent Sign (%)

SUBJECT: LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY 3 SYNONYMS

After a discussion of the word synonym, students could pantomime the original word and show how each synonym differs.

SAD - unhappy, sorrowful, melancholy, morose, blue, down-in-the-dumps, depressed

HAPPY - cheerful, ecstatic, chipper, smilingly, pleased, jolly, whoopee, glad

ANGRY - mad, irate, upset, furious, enraged, sore

CONTENT - satisfied, resigned, accepted

EXCITED - inspired, awakened, thrilled, sparked

DIRTY - messy, grimy, filthy, soiled

SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY 1 COMMUNITY PEOPLE

Remind students that adults usually work at some job in order to make money to live. Ask, "What are some jobs you see adults working at in your town? What do these people do that shows you they are working at something special? Can someone show us what a _____ does?" Choose a few jobs from the following list and have a student act out what he thinks the worker does.

MAIL CARRIER	SALESPERSON	STOREKEEPER	CUSTODIAN
NURSE	BABY-SITTER	POLICE OFFICER	PAPER CARRIER
DOCTOR	PLUMBER	FARMER	SECRETARY
TEACHER	MINISTER	GARDENER	HOMEMAKER
SERVICE TECHNICIAN	ASTRONAUT	SERVICE STATION ATTENDANT	

Then say, "Being children makes all of you special people, working at special jobs. What do children work at? What are some jobs that you are doing?" Students will name things. Add a few suggestions of your own if necessary, i.e., wash dishes, wipe dishes, set the table, make the bed, pick up toys, sweep, dust, mow the lawn, shovel snow, empty the garbage, play, read, color. "These are jobs that all of you might do at home. I'd like to see how you do these jobs, and since you have no beds or dishes or grass here, you will have to pantomime or act out what happens." Do an example for the students, such as sweeping the floor, and have the students see the broom, the dirt and the floor area and what happens to the person working. Does the person get tired, hot? Does the person smile, laugh, whistle, cry? As a group, have the students pantomime the jobs they do at home. A variation: have the students perform the same job feeling differently each time, i.e., sad, happy, tired.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY 2 COMMUNICATION

Following discussion of commercials as communication ask the students to do parodies on a commercial they have seen. Divide the class into groups. Give each group a product. They must quickly decide which commercial to do and how. After a few minutes of preparation, the group will dramatize the commercial. The audience will guess the product and determine whether they were persuaded to buy it or not.

Choose from the following list of products:

Pop

Shampoo

Dog Food

A Car

Laundry Soap

Aspirin or Antacids

A Computer

Pizza

Breakfast Food

SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY 3 EVENTS BASED ON CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES

Discuss with the students an event that is current in the school, community, or nation. Then discuss special events in the students' lives.

"You all have been involved in certain events. Can you tell me about a few of the things that have happened to you?" Their suggestions might include some of the following: birthday party, Halloween, the circus, Christmas, a slumber party, a trip, the fourth of July, a hike, New Years, a picnic, a school party, a fair, a game. Then say, "Now we are going to make one of these events you've experienced happen again by acting it out. Maybe there is something special that can happen on a picnic. So, let's have a picnic and see what happens!"

"First, we need to pack a lunch. Think of your favorite food, pack it and bring it along. Do you all know what you're bringing? I have a blanket that I'll bring." Have the students get in pairs and as leader, bring them around the room several times to get a place in mind. "Here's a good place. Now I'll spread the blanket with your help, and we will sit down and eat our lunches. I'm anxious to see what you have brought along. It smells so good. Why don't you show me what you brought? First, I'll show you what I've brought." Have each student pantomime what he brought while the others guess. Finish the picnic by suggesting that the students pick up all the paper from their lunches and put it in the litter can. Then in pairs make the trip home.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY 4 TRANSPORTATION

Discuss the different ways to travel. Make a list which might include the following: car, boat, wagon, sled, bus, feet, truck, plane, horse, train, camel, riding lawn mower, dog sled, baby carriage, helicopter, bicycle, stroller, balloon, motorcycle, escalator, scooter, elevator, snowmobile.

As a group have the students pantomime a few different modes of transportation.

"All of you have ridden in a car. I want to see how you ride in a car, and since we have no car here, you will have to pantomime or act out what it is like. I'm going to be the driver, and I want some riders. Okay, get into the car. Did you fasten your seat belts and shoulder harnesses? Now, you're all riding along, and you see your best friend walking by. What do you do?" Students should wave and yell, "Hi!" "Now, you're riding along and I suddenly hit the brakes, and the car quickly stops. What happens to you?" Students should be jolted in their seats. "Well, you're riding along again, and the driver decides to turn a sharp corner to the left. Show me what happens. Now, the driver turns a sharp corner to the right. What happens? You're still riding along with me, and you're eating a candy bar. Show me how good it tastes. What do you do with the wrapper?" Students should put it in the litter bag. "We're still riding along, and the driver tells a funny joke. What do you do? Good. I have a lot of happy riders. Now, you're getting pretty thirsty after eating that candy bar. What do you look like? The driver just went by a root beer stand but didn't stop! What do you do? Now I'm going to stop here. The curb is on my right. As a rider, which side of the car are you going to get out of?"

SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY 5 STORES

"You've all been in stores and seen what is inside them. Usually, if you want something, you'll go to the store that you think might have it, pick it out, pay for it, and go home. There are, however, specialty stores that sell certain kinds of items to be used in certain places. What specialty stores have you been in?" Students should indicate hardware, grocery, drug, novelty, paint, furniture, carpet, appliance, music, etc. "What kind of store do we have when items are stocked from each of these specialty stores?" Students should indicate a department store. "This kind of store almost always has some order to it. Items are set up according to their use, or in departments. If you want to buy a pencil, you go to the section that sells pencils. In very large stores these sections are usually labeled with a sign over the aisle or on the wall."

"Have any of you ever been in a big department store with many floors? Now is your chance to go shopping in a very big one. First, I'll show you a list of departments, and you must choose the department you'd like to work in."

children's clothing	crafts/fabrics	bedding
women's clothing	pharmacy	bath
men's clothing	books	gardening
shoes	music	bakery
housewares	furniture	knickknacks
carpets	office supplies	sporting goods
toys and games	cosmetics	hardware
jewelry	candy counter	electrical
automotive	shop tools	

"Think of what you want to sell from the department you're in. Don't tell anyone. This room is our store, and each of you has a place or department in the store. We all want to buy something but don't know what it is. So, we start by going to a clerk (one student) who will pantomime the item to be sold, and we'll guess what it is and which department it is in." Continue around the room with the students guessing. Buy the item and pay for it.

SUBJECT: SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY 6 THE FINISHED PRODUCT

A visit to a bakery or a film might be used preceding this lesson. Discuss with the students how they think a loaf of bread gets to the table, assuming it was not baked at home.

Explain to the students that you have twelve cards, each containing a step in the process of turning wheat into bread. Hand out the cards to volunteers who will act out the step. Suggest that today bread is made entirely by machinery, so they will have to go back 100 years in time. The rest of the class will try to guess the step. Other products can be used equally well (i.e., a house, a sweater as the finished product).

BREAD: (1) sowing wheat seeds (2) harvesting the grain (3) hauling in the grain (4) loading the grain into a cart (5) shipping the grain to the mill (6) grinding the grain into flour (7) shipping the flour to the bakeries (8) making the flour into dough (9) making the dough into bread loaves and baking it (10) packaging the bread (11) delivering the bread to the store (12) selling the bread to the customer. NOTE: twelve cards used.

HOUSE: (1) planting the tree (2) chopping the tree (3) loading and hauling the logs to the river (4) floating the logs down the river (5) sawing the logs at the sawmill (6) stacking and hauling the boards to the lumber yard (7) selling the lumber to the carpenter (8) carpenter sawing the boards and building the house. NOTE: eight cards used.

SWEATER: (1) tending the sheep (2) shearing the sheep (3) pressing the fleece into sacks (4) hauling the sacks of wool to market or thread mill (5) washing and carding (combing) the wool at the thread mill (6) spinning the fiber into yarn (7) dying the yarn into different colors (8) knitting the yarn into a sweater. NOTE: eight cards used.

For this procedure a puppet is used.

A visit to a museum might precede this exercise.

"Has anyone been to a museum? What things does a museum usually have? It contains items that people used in the past. Do we always understand how the items were used? Most of the items we see in museums had to be operated by hand. Why?" Students should respond that there was no electricity then.

"Now, this person (the puppet) happens to be Ben Franklin. He knows and understands almost all of the things you find in a museum. But here he sits not knowing a thing about the fancy gadgets we have today. Here is a list of items used today that Ben Franklin never dreamed of. You must describe these modern inventions to Ben, who was an inventor himself. You can use your voice and body to do this." Go through the list asking who can describe the item to Ben. Pose questions to make the descriptions as vivid as possible. Use questions relying on the senses of smell, taste, touch, sound, and sight.

light bulb	washer	dryer	can opener	toaster
hair dryer	telephone	blender	television	record player
typewriter	percolator	radio	airplane	vacuum cleaner
car	sewing machine	ball point pen		

SUBJECT: MATH **ACTIVITY 1 SETS**

Have the students walk, march, hop or skip around the room in a circle to the sound of a beat. When you call out a number, they must group themselves in that amount. Have any remainders group also. Try some simple addition and subtraction and have the students group themselves into the answer.

Have the students pretend that they are pennies. Let them walk, march, hop or skip around the room in a circle. When you call out "nickels," they must group themselves accordingly. Repeat the exercise using dimes, nickels or other variations such as one nickel and two pennies.

Other sets to call out:

number of days in a week

number of seasons in a year

number of months in a year

number of fingers on your hands

number of years in your age

number of the grade you are in

number of inches in a foot

number of feet in a yard

SUBJECT: MATH **ACTIVITY 2 USING NUMBERS**

"We use numbers every day without really thinking about it. They come very naturally to us. When and where do you use numbers?" Students will describe a variety of situations and times. "Today we are going to act out situations in which we use numbers. Then we will try to guess what the situation is." Give them an example such as waking up to an alarm clock. Ask: "How was I using numbers?" Ask the students to pantomime situations of their own.

Some suggestions:

using money	baking a cake
finding distance	using a calendar
determining age	telling time
dialing the phone	turning on the TV or radio
using a calculator	

As a group activity, have the students pantomime machines that use numbers.

Some suggestions:

an adding machine	a pinball machine
a computer	a typewriter
a radio	an airplane, car, train
a telephone	a thermometer

DA: 8/90

SUBJECT: MATH **ACTIVITY 3 LINES, ANGLES, AND SHAPES**

Discuss lines, angles, and shapes. Bring the discussion around to shapes in nature. Hand out cards that contain names of things found in nature that have a certain shape. Have a student pantomime the object, and the others guess what it is and the kind of shape it is.

Some suggestions:

pine cone -- cone

mushroom -- cone

sun -- sphere

tornado -- spiral

seashell -- spiral

dandelion -- sphere

starfish -- angle

snowflake -- angle

tree -- line

blade of grass -- line

flying bird -- line and angle

cloud -- sphere

earth -- sphere

ear of corn -- ellipse

tomato -- sphere

potato -- sphere

clump of dirt -- sphere

deer horns -- line and angle

volcano -- cone

apple -- sphere

pool of water -- sphere

rabbit tail -- sphere

a stick -- line

honeycomb -- angle

ray of light -- line and angle

salt -- cube

"As soon as people learned about numbers, they discovered that numbers could be used to describe amounts of various kinds. This included not only simple counting, but, also, weights and measures. Before there was a number system, how do you suppose people described something that weighed five pounds?" A person could have shown how heavy it was by pantomiming or comparing it to something else. Ask: "Can someone show how heavy a big rock is? An arm load of sticks? Three animal skins?"

"This system of showing weight wasn't very accurate. So, through the centuries, a system of weighing, using numbers, was devised. First, everyone had to agree to given amounts."

"We have come a long way. We now have many units of weight to describe how heavy something is. What are some units of weight? What units of measure do we now have? Equipped with numbers we are able to solve problems and describe accurately what we mean. Today we are going to solve problems by describing. We are going to act them out."

Divide the class into six groups. Give each group one of the following problems. They must solve the problem and then act it out. Suggest that they use a setting and a dialogue. The rest of the class will try to guess what the problem is and the answer.

37 inches - _____ feet + _____ inches

3 inches x _____ = 36 inches

52 ounces = _____ pounds + _____ ounces

2 feet, 4 inches = _____ inches

6 quarts = _____ pints

2 quarts + 4 pints = _____ pints

"What if we didn't have a system to convey our idea of amount, distance, etc.? About 8,000 years ago people didn't know how to count. To represent a certain number, they used whatever was available. How do you suppose they did that?" Students should suggest that they compared their ideas of amount with something such as fingers and toes. "Also, at this time, people had a very limited vocabulary. All they could indicate was 'yes' or 'no', and 'I don't understand'." Have the students in one row turn to the person across the aisle from them. They are to explain to their neighbor how many deer they saw today without saying anything. The neighbor can indicate understanding by nodding. Reverse the order, using the number of days that have passed since it has rained.

"This should show you how difficult it was in those days without handy numbers. Today, we have numbers. In fact, we rely on numbers so much that we often take them for granted." Divide the class into groups of six. Give each group an equation. They must act out the equation, using a setting and dialogue so that the rest of the class can guess what the problem is and the answer.

Some suggestions:

4 x 15 = 60

75 5 = 15

7 x X = 56

40 + X = 125

65 - 32 = 33

3b + 12.b = _____

SUBJECT: SCIENCE **ACTIVITY 1 COLORS**

Hold up red, yellow, and blue paper. Ask, "Who can tell me the names of the colored paper I'm holding up? Can you name something you've seen that is the same color as the paper?" Students will name several objects for each color. "It's easy to name objects that have a color. I wonder if you can show me what the object looks like by being that object?"

"There are many objects in this room that contain color. Look around you." Students will name things they see. "Today, we are going to pantomime or act out certain objects that we see in the room. I'll say a color and you find an object that is that color and pantomime it." Students will pantomime various objects that they see and tell what their object is. Variation: have the students pantomime objects that have their favorite color in them.

SUBJECT: SCIENCE **ACTIVITY 2 SEASONS**

"One nice thing about living in North Dakota is that we have four definite seasons each year. What are those seasons? Do you have special things that you do during each of those seasons?" Students will talk about the things they do. "Plants and animals do different things with the change of the seasons, too." Students will tell about the changes that take place in plants and animals. "Today, we want to show some of the things we do during the different seasons." Have the students sit on the floor in four groups. Each group is a season and must talk over the activities they do during that season. "When I call out a season, that group must show us one activity which we can do in that season, and the rest of us will guess what they are doing."

Some suggestions:

Spring: flying kites, wading in water puddles, planting a garden.

Summer: playing baseball, swimming, going on a trip, building a fort.

Autumn: Halloween, raking leaves, building a fire, starting school.

Winter: shoveling snow, Christmas, having a snowball fight, ice skating, skiing, sledding.

"There are many different things that give us heat. It all originally comes from the sun, but we do not think of it as sun heat. We think of it in the form that we use it. What are some things that produce heat?" Fire, electricity, gas, oil. "Let's think about ways in which these producers of heat help us to live better." They help plants grow into food, keep us warm, cook our food, make engines run. "I have a list of ways in which these producers help us." The students may add to the list. "Each of you select one way that we get heat, then decide how you want to act out some use of that heat. How does it help us? You can use your body and voice." Ask for volunteers and have them start out by saying, "I am electricity. I help by . . . " Let the student give clues if the class cannot guess.

Fire	Electricity	Gas
match	toaster	lantern
bonfire	iron	car
candles	washer	heating a home
	dryer	stove
	stove	tractor

SUBJECT: SCIENCE **ACTIVITY 4 LIGHT**

"Let's find out about different objects that give us light." The teacher has a list started and the students may add to it.

Objects that give light:

light bulbs	flashlights	sun
neon tubes	lightning	moon
fireflies	stars	candles
fire	kerosene lamps	matches

"Each of these objects has uses for the light it produces. When I point to the object you must pantomime one way in which the object may be used, and we will guess what you are doing."

SUBJECT: SCIENCE **ACTIVITY 5 SOUND**

"It is easy to tell where you have been if you show pictures of the place. It is not so easy to tell where you have been by using only the sounds associated with the place. I have a list of places where you would hear sounds. I'm going to choose a place and have you make the sounds that you would hear if you were there." Show students the list and talk about the places. Ask for volunteers to make the sounds they would hear in the places on the list. They may add their own actions. The students will try to guess the places.

Some suggestions of possible places:

zoo	seashore	farm
train station	breakfast table	toy store
airport	foreign city	laundry
bed	cafeteria	music store
school playground	downtown intersection	shower

SUBJECT: SCIENCE **ACTIVITY 6 WEATHER**

"We have all read or heard about different weather conditions around the world, but many of us have not experienced all the kinds of weather that exist." Discuss with the students the kinds of weather they have been in. "Today, we're going to divide into groups and improvise situations that occur because of the weather." Divide the class into six groups. Give each group a weather condition and let them have a few minutes to think about how they want to present their situation.

Some suggested weather conditions:

tornado	fog	blizzard
hurricane	sleet storm	severe heat wave
flood	thunder and lightning storm	

EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Evaluating any art education program is difficult since the objectives of such a program deal with appreciation and understanding of a process rather than the mastery of specific facts. In evaluating the effectiveness of a specific exercise the teacher might use the stated objectives of that exercise as a basis for evaluation. To what degree were the stated objectives met? Other questions which might be asked in regard to a particular activity might include the following:

For the Class

1. Did they enjoy the activity?
2. What were some of the things they learned?
3. Which was the best part of the experience?
4. If they didn't enjoy it, why not?
5. If the value wasn't clear, why not?
6. How can the activity be improved?

For the Individual Student

1. Did everyone participate? If not, why not?
2. Did one or two dominate the activity?
3. Were the nonparticipators interested observers or indifferent rejectors?
4. How can I involve those who were reluctant to participate?
5. Was there evidence of learning? What kind?
6. What was the best aspect of the activity?
7. What was the worst aspect of the activity?
8. Which of the student's interests might be developed for future creative activities?

For the Teacher

1. How well did I organize the activity?
2. Did I encourage everyone to participate?
3. Did I go out of my way to reassure reluctant students?

4. Did I demonstrate that the students' ideas were of great value?

5. Did I dominate the activity, or was I too passive?

6. Did I participate or sit back and watch?

7. Did I enjoy the activity?

8. What did I learn from this experience?

9. How can I improve my role in such activities?

In determining the progress of individual students the teacher might make evaluations using the following checklist near the beginning and end of the school year or before and after a particular unit of study. Changes in the teacher's impression of the student's reactions and abilities can indicate areas of growth as well as areas which need more attention.

Interest and Involvement

1. Does the student seem interested?

2. Does the student ask pertinent questions?

3. Does the student show evidence of an interest in drama which continues outside the classroom?

4. Does the student bring things from home to show, discuss or use in drama projects?

5. Does the student seem to enjoy sharing his/her dramatic work with others?

Physical Abilities

1. Is the student rigid or flexible in physical movement?

2. Does the student display resilience and control in movement?

3. Are there any body areas the student could use better or more fully?

4. Does the student display an increasing movement vocabulary?

5. Does the student use space well? (Avoids bunching? Changes directions easily without collisions?)

6. Does the student have an increasing ability to improvise spontaneously and to display meaning clearly through movement?

7. Can the student invent movements or sequences of movement?

8. Can the student learn and repeat a sequence of movements?

9. Does the student handle materials or objects well in presenting dramatic movement?

Emotional Expression

1. Does the student seem secure/insecure, stable/unstable, calm/tense, friendly/shy, self-confident/anxious?

2. Does the student seem dependent/independent?

3. Does the student adapt easily to different stimuli?

Relationship With Others

1. Does the student play or talk easily with other students?

2. Does the student work more sensitively and cooperatively with others than at the last observation?

3. Does the student make a contribution to group work without attempting to dominate?

Initiative and Creativity

1. Can the student select activities and dramatic roles with ease?

2. Does the student volunteer ideas?

3. Does the student produce a large number of new ideas? Are these ideas significantly different from the suggested examples or the contributions of other students?

4. Does the student show initiative in developing projects?

5. Does the student work with good concentration even without close supervision?

6. Does the student display signs of democratic leadership?

Listening, Observing, Thought, and Language

1. Is the student's use of words adequate or above average?

2. Does the student follow spoken or written directions easily?

3. Is the student able to recognize, move to, and make up simple rhythms and/or tunes?

4. Does the student seem to be increasingly sensitive to sensual stimuli. Can the student recognize finer distinctions in vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell?

The following questions might be helpful in teacher self-evaluation to determine growth in teaching effectiveness.

1. Am I communicating effectively with my students? (i.e., am I using words the children understand? Am I extending their vocabulary by my own use of words? Am I able to select examples and situations which are familiar to my students?)

2. Do I use my voice and body effectively to communicate with and demonstrate for my students?

3. Am I able to stimulate and guide my students through "side coaching" which does not intrude on their activity or break their concentration?

4. Am I sensitive to the individual strengths and weaknesses of each student and do I encourage creativity without being judgmental?

Whoever guides educational dramatics does not sit at his or her desk and watch the students work, but, goes adventuring along with them; reading countless books, finding background materials and pictures; taking the students on trips; encouraging them to include music and dance, make designs, and do creative writing. Whoever guides educational dramatics makes it so exciting for the students that they talk about it at home and bring back information, costumes, pictures, and properties.

Whoever guides educational dramatics must realize that the exercises attempted demand utmost patience, love, respect, and understanding along with firm direction and supervision. But, with imagination and wisdom, a teacher will see the aliveness and creativity of the human spirit.

By using dramatics in the classroom, the teacher learns to see his or her students as real people voicing ideas and opinions in a natural way, growing and developing, becoming more capable of seeing themselves as they really are, and becoming more sensitive to others around them. By using creative dramatics a unique thing happens, almost unnoticed: playing and learning go together.

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